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By the same Author,

THE CHURCH of ST. PATRICK: an Historical
Inquiry into the Independence of the Ancient Church in
Ireland.

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ECCLESIASTICAL
MAP OF
IRELAND

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London
JAMES BURNS,
1846.



A History

OF THE

ANCIENT CHURCH IN IRELAND.

BY

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Dublin

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN;
CURATE OF KILKEEDY, DIOCESE OF LIMERICK

“Why hast thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off
her grapes?”

LONDON :

JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.

1845.

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P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH the Author of the following pages has taken some pains to write a popular History of the Irish Church in a fair and impartial spirit, yet he is sensible that the result of his labours falls far short of his own wishes. He is fully aware that it ought to be the aim of every writer of Church History both to speak with reverence of the ancient Saints, and, in reviewing their times, not to judge the actions of the past by the standard of the present, as if this were invariably a sure and infallible criterion. It is not, however, always easy to avoid falling into this mistake. When obliged to pass an opinion on the conduct of historical characters, one is very apt to say, “This man did wrong,” or “Such a one acted injudiciously,”

because, according to modern notions, a particular course of conduct might be so regarded. The historian, it is true, should record facts, and not his own views of them; and the best history is that wherein the author scarcely appears at all. But circumstances sometimes arise which render it desirable for a writer to deviate a little from this canon; and in such a case, it does not fall to the lot of every one (and certainly not of the present writer) to be able to grasp the whole truth, without the fear of being blinded by prejudice, or drawn aside by pre-conceived notions. This, then, must be his apology, should the reader discover in the following pages any unreal pictures of the past. It would of course be presumptuous in the author to suppose that no such picture is to be found: sufficient for himself the consciousness that it has been his endeavour, in every instance, to discover the whole truth, to record it fairly, and not to distort it by any unnecessary comments.

But this work can lay claim to no other merit than that of being a faithful compilation from the received authorities. It has been compiled

from Colgan, Ussher, and other authors of credit. As far as possible, the writer consulted such original sources as were within his reach. He owes much to the “Ecclesiastical History of Ireland” by the late learned Dr. Lanigan, whose memory must be gratefully cherished by every student of Irish Church History: yet it will be found that he has not placed an implicit reliance upon the authority of Dr. Lanigan, although it is deservedly high. Where Lanigan differed from Colgan and the older authorities, it seemed fitting to follow these, who had better means of knowing the truth than were within that author’s reach; and, besides, Dr. Lanigan appears to have been somewhat capricious in the way in which he deals with hitherto received historical facts and the most ancient traditions,—very often rejecting what, up to his time, had been admitted by the best-informed writers; so that his work, although the result of great labour and learning, and indispensable to the student of Irish history, must at times be received with caution in some of its statements.

It is desirable to observe, that a great part

of the present volume was written before the publication of an interesting little work, "A Primer of the Church History of Ireland," by the Rev. Robert King. And the writer must not omit to express the obligation he is under to his friend, Mr. Eugene Curry, for some important information from the Irish manuscripts.

W. G. T.

Clarina, Limerick,

June 30, 1845.

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THE
CHURCH IN IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION AND EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THERE is a period in all histories when conjecture must supply the place of authentic fact. This is in an especial manner the case in the earlier history of Christian Churches, when the only persons to record the passing events were themselves engaged in more pressing avocations. Such men could have little leisure to commit to writing the success or failure of their missionary exertions. They were content to sow the seed that was afterwards to spring up and bear a rich harvest; not solicitous about their own fame, or anxious for the praise of men. In many cases, also, no apparent success could crown their labours during their own lifetime. So difficult is it to prepare the neglected soil for the reception of true religion — to make “the crooked straight and the rough places plain” — that although the seed has taken root, its growth and progress may

be too slow and feeble even to cheer on with hope those who are engaged in the task. Thus they would have little to narrate, except their own fears and fruitless exertions, the opposition they had met with, and the persecutions they had endured. But such events a strong religious principle would not permit them to record; they therefore laboured in silence, yet in faith, expecting to reap the fruits of their toil in a future world.

Whether it be from want of authentic information, or from the existence of a general tradition, it is impossible to say; but it is certain, that most of the ancient European Churches have wished to connect their plantation with the personal preaching of the Apostles, or their immediate followers. Thus, St. Paul is said, with much probability, to have visited Britain, and some have gone so far as to hint that he extended his visit to Ireland; others have wildly asserted, that Christianity was introduced into Ireland by St. James the Great; while a third, and more numerous party, tell us of Asiatic missionaries,—perhaps, they say, some of those who accompanied Pothinus and St. Irenæus into Gaul in the second century. All these conjectures are insufficiently proved; and, if we are to be guided by mere considerations of comparative probability, England rather than any other country must be looked to, for the first missionaries to the Irish coasts. The period of their arrival is very likely to have been the early part of the fourth century,

when British Christians may have sought refuge in Ireland from the fury of the Diocletian persecution, then raging throughout all the provinces of the Roman empire; for, as Ireland was beyond the boundary of the emperor's dominions, it was almost the only place that could afford an asylum to the Christians, until the return of peace and security.

Christianity was for a long time confined to the southern portion of the island; but even here its progress was slow. A few families and solitary hermits constituted the infant Church. A strong and apparently well-founded tradition asserts, that among these there were four bishops,—Kiaran, Declan, Ailbe, and Ibar. Kiaran has received the honorary title of “First-born of the Saints of Ireland,” and is commonly regarded as the first bishop of Ossory. Declan lived at Ardmore, in the county of Waterford, where a succession of bishops was kept up for some time after his death. Ailbe is reported to have been the first bishop of Emly; and Ibar passed a very strict life in the island of Beg-erin (or Little Erin),¹ where the ruins of his small cell, or monastery, are still to be seen. It would be wrong, because these bishops are some of them considered the founders of sees, to suppose that they had any fixed sphere of duty. They were rather plain and zealous ascetics, who endeavoured to live by some strict rule of piety. No doubt they did what they could towards the conversion of their

¹ Situated near the town of Wexford.

countrymen ; but the state of the Church for a long time was not such as to give them either clergy to govern, or dioceses to take the charge of. It was respect for the memories of these holy persons which caused the places of their abode to become ever afterwards the residences of bishops.¹

The attention of the Roman bishop was at length attracted to the spiritual destitution of Ireland. No sooner was it made known to Celestine I., who then occupied the chair of Rome, that the Irish Christians needed some experienced head to regulate their ecclesiastical discipline, and to provide for the extension of Christianity, than he ordained and sent, as St. Prosper informs us, “to the Scots believing in Christ, Palladius, once a deacon of the Roman Church, to be their first or *chief*² bishop.”

¹ These bishops, it must be remarked, were living at the period of St. Patrick’s mission. All that is known about them may be learned in Ussher’s *Brit. Eccl. Antiq.* cap. xvi. (*Works*, vol. vi. p. 332, &c.), Colgan’s *Tr. Th.* p. 250, &c., and *AA. SS.* p. 458, &c. Dr. Lanigan has bestowed much learning on his attempt to prove that these bishops were not in Ireland at the early period assigned to them. I have weighed his arguments with some attention, and am satisfied that they are inconclusive. If correct, they would prove more than he would have wished.

² So Prosper’s phrase, “*primus episcopus*,” is understood by Ussher. Palladius is styled “*primus Scotorum episcopus*,” in the same sense as St. Austin has been called “*primus Anglorum episcopus*” (*vide Ussher*, vol. vi. p. 288). Neither, strictly speaking, were the *first* bishops of the countries they

This Palladius was already known for his efforts to suppress the Pelagian heresy in Britain, his native country; for it was at his instigation that Celestine sent St. Germain of Auxerre into England, in the hope that his exertions might reclaim those British Christians who had lapsed from the right faith. The mission of Palladius to Ireland was unattended with success. Early in the year 431, he landed in the ancient territory of Hy-Garchon—which was nearly co-extensive with the present counties of Wicklow and Wexford—and was at first well received by the inhabitants. Tradition says, that he erected three churches for the converts who believed through his means; but a disagreement that sprung up between him and Nathi, the pagan chieftain of Hy-Garchon, terminated fatally to the mission. Palladius was obliged to consult for his own safety by flight. He retired into North Britain, and is believed to have ended his days at the town of Fordun, in Mearnshire. The failure of his mission gave rise to a proverb among the Irish, that “not to Palladius, but to Patrick, did the Lord grant the conversion of Ireland.”

visited; and consequently the word *primus* must mean *primarius*, or chief bishop.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE AND MISSION OF ST. PATRICK.

WHEN the failure of Palladius's mission became known abroad, it fell to the lot of St. Patrick to enter upon an undertaking that was likely to be attended with much danger and little success. The result, however, was very different; for, after making every allowance for the exaggerations that may naturally be expected in the legends of this bishop, it must notwithstanding be acknowledged, that the extension of the Christian religion among the Irish was mainly owing to the assiduity of his labours.

St. Patrick—whose original name was Succat—was born in A.D. 372, at Nemithur, among the Britons of Alcluaid, which was apparently the ancient name of the modern Dunbarton. His father was Calphornius, an illustrious priest, the son of Olid, or Potitus, a deacon.¹ At the age of sixteen Patrick was taken captive by a company of

¹ This is according to the Irish Life, preserved in the *Leabhar Breac*, an ancient manuscript collection of valuable Irish tracts, in the possession of the Royal Irish Academy. But the *Confession of St. Patrick* makes Calphornius a deacon, and Potitus a priest.

pirates, and carried into Ireland. Here he became the slave of a chieftain named Milcho, whose residence was within the ancient territory of Dal- aradia. His occupation, while with this master, was to look after the sheep; an employment not very distasteful to him, inasmuch as it afforded him many opportunities of meditation and prayer, without the risk of interruption.

He remained in this situation for the space of six years; and when at length he recovered his liberty, it was only to be re-captured. It is well known that at that remote period, Britain was greatly exposed to the inroads of the Picts and Scots, who, removed but a few degrees from barbarism, used to delight in any excursions that promised danger and plunder. A fruitful source of gain to them was the sale of captives as slaves in Ireland. This traffic not only existed in the country previous to the introduction of Christianity, but there is reason to fear that it prevailed in it to some extent until the arrival of the English in the twelfth century.

The term of St. Patrick's second captivity, however, was but sixty days. Upon its expiration, he returned once more to his family, who entreated him to continue with them, and not to put into execution the purpose he had conceived of passing over into Gaul, and there devoting himself to a holy life. But he was not to be moved from his resolution, and perhaps was strengthened in it by

a dream which he had about this time.¹ In the vision of the night, he perceived a man named *Victricius* coming as if from Ireland, with a vast number of letters. He gave him one of them, and he read the commencement of the letter—"The voice of the Irish." He had scarcely begun perusing this epistle, when he heard the inhabitants of the wood *Foclut* calling to him, as it were with one mouth, "We entreat thee, holy youth, come and still walk amongst us." There is no reason to doubt the probability of his having had such a dream. St. Patrick was much affected by it; and it probably had the effect of hastening his departure from Britain, in the hope of returning, in some future years, duly prepared to preach the gospel in the land of his captivity. In Gaul, he spent four years in the monastery then but recently founded by St. Martin at Tours. He also studied with St. Germain of Auxerre, under whose directions he acquired a knowledge of "the ecclesiastical canons, and served God in labours, in fastings, in chastity of life, in contrition of heart, and in the love of God and of his neighbour."²

Passing over other events of his life, we come to the period of his call to Ireland. He was in the north-west of Gaul when the failure of Palladius's mission became known to him. A Gallican bishop

¹ Vide Confessio, cap. iii. (Opuscula S. Patricii, p. 194: Dub. 1835).

- Vide Vita Trip. lib. i. cap. 31; Colgan's Tr. Th. p. 121.

admitted him to episcopal orders; and supported by the approbation of Pope Celestine—some say commissioned by his authority¹—he soon afterwards set forth for Ireland, accompanied by some priests and deacons, who had been ordained along with him.

The missionary party arrived in Ireland in the year 432. They landed at the place now occupied by the town of Wicklow; and, after making a short stay on the Isle of Holmpatrick, proceeded to visit St. Patrick's former master, Milcho, in Dal-aradia. The object of this visit was to convert Milcho and his family to the Christian faith, and thus to make the best possible return for any kindness that might have been shewn St. Patrick in the days of his captivity. They went on their way with light hearts and high hopes, for St. Patrick already had a foretaste of the success that was to attend his mission. During his brief sojourn in Wicklow, he succeeded in bringing over to the faith Sinell, the son of Finnchad, who was the first of the Irish whom he baptised. He also converted Dicho, a northern chieftain, with whom he had lodged on the way to his former master's. This Dicho bestowed the place on which his barn was erected upon St. Patrick, as a site for a church.

¹ The Irish Life, in the *Leabhar Breac*, says that Patrick did visit Rome, but that he was made a bishop before that event; and that on the failure of Palladius's mission he was ordered by Celestine to replace him. Vide Appendix.

It was named *Sabhul Padruig*, “the barn of Patrick,” and its ruins are still to be seen at Saul, in the county of Down.¹ It is a small stone church, looking from north to south, instead of the more usual aspect. One of St. Patrick’s biographers notices this circumstance particularly, and informs us, that “it was so built at the request of Dicho, he knows not for what reason; but perhaps,” he adds, “that the worshippers of idols might be roused, by this mystical building, from the chill of infidelity to the warmth of Christian faith and charity.”² The chieftain Dicho remained St. Patrick’s steady friend during the rest of his life; and Saul itself became his favourite retreat in his latter days.

The hopes with which this success inspired St. Patrick were not realised. He found his former master, Milcho, an obstinate pagan, not to be reasoned out of his besotted idolatry. Returning, therefore, to Dicho, he continued to preach to the Irish in that part of the island, until near the Easter of the following year, 433, when he changed the scene of his labours, with a view to visit Tara, then the capital of Ireland.

Tara, or Temora, situated in the county of Meath, was known from the most remote antiquity as the royal residence of the monarchs of Ireland.

¹ The Irish word *Sabhul* is pronounced nearly *Saul*.

² Vide Jocelyn’s Vita S. Patricii, cap. 32. (Colgan’s Tr. Th. p. 72).

Intimately associated with the most cherished traditions of the Irish people, the halls of Tara have been made the scene of many strange adventures. Of its pretensions to antiquity and pre-eminence it is impossible to form any opinion from its present condition, since the unsparing hand of time (lately assisted by the avaricious plough) has destroyed almost every vestige of its ancient state. It is quite true, however, that it once enjoyed whatever of distinction and rude grandeur may have belonged to the sovereigns of an ancient people, imperfectly civilised. The legend-writers tell a strange story, how it was cursed by a monk, named Rodan, or Ruadhan, because Dermott, king of Ireland, came to his cell, and dragged out of it a kinsman of the monk, who had fled there for sanctuary. From that time, they say, it has been a deserted waste.¹

The most interesting event that ever occurred at Tara was the attempt made by St. Patrick to convert the king and chieftains of Ireland. It was Easter-eve when St. Patrick, in the course of his journey from Ulster, had arrived at a place called in the Irish language *Ferta-fir-feic*, or “the graves of the men of Feic.” Here he resolved to pass the

¹ The desertion of Tara took place in the year 565. The reader who may feel interested in the history of this ancient place is referred to Mr. Petrie's essay “On the History and Antiquities of Tara Hill,” published amongst the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.

night; and accordingly his companions lighted a fire, most probably to prepare their food.¹ But it happened that about this time also the Irish chieftains were assembled at the celebration of one of their religious festivals; and it was the privilege of Tara, that none should presume to light a fire in Ireland upon that day until the sacred fire had been first lighted at the solemnity. This privilege St. Patrick ignorantly violated; and when Leogaire, the Irish monarch, heard the fact, he became much alarmed. The story adds, that his magi, equally terrified by their superstitious fears, urged him to make prompt exertions to have that strange fire extinguished. They told him that, unless it were put out before nightfall, whoever had caused it to be lighted would hereafter enjoy the sovereignty of Ireland. Leogaire accordingly set out at once to put the unknown offender of his laws to death; but in this purpose he was disappointed. Having next tried in vain to accomplish his object by indirect means, he appears to have at last relented; and, forgetful of the danger threatened to his dominions, he invited Patrick to the palace of Tara. The invitation was at once accepted. With eight companions, and a young boy named Benen, or Benignus—afterwards his successor in the see of Armagh—St. Patrick appeared before the king and chieftains upon the following day, which was Easter Sunday. So favourable an opportunity for declaring the high

¹ Vide Appendix.

objects of his mission the zealous bishop did not overlook; and, notwithstanding the opposition of the pagan priests, his preaching was most successful. He gained over to the Gospel several zealous converts. Among them were a celebrated bard named Dubtach, and his young disciple Fiech, who afterwards lived a bishop at Sletty. It is even said that Leogaire himself—although at first he withheld him—crying out with tears, “It is better to believe than perish,” was added to the number of the faithful.

The success attending this first public preaching of the Gospel naturally increased the ardour of the missionaries, who spent the following week in preaching to the people in the surrounding districts, and in baptising their converts. Some of these were men of high rank, who were liberal in their donations to the infant Church. Conall, a brother of King Leogaire, gave the ground on which his own hall stood as a site for a church. Enda, another brother, immediately upon his conversion both dedicated his infant son to a religious life, and consigned to the service of religion the ninth part of all his lands and farms.

In the course of St. Patrick’s missionary journeys, he visited also the south of Ireland. Ængus, the king of Cashel, received him courteously, listened to his preaching, and became a convert; but the earlier Christians of the country—especially the bishops Ailbe, Declan, Kiaran, and Ibar—did not

give him so glad a welcome. They either had not been made acquainted with the extent of his exertions among their pagan countrymen, or they had some fears lest the object of his visit might be to claim supremacy over them. It is expressly stated, that Ibar would on no account submit to him, because he did not wish a foreigner to be *the patron of Ireland*. At length, however, their differences were made up, and they were persuaded to co-operate with each other in a more cordial spirit.¹ St. Patrick after this returned to the north, where we next find him engaged in the foundation of the see of Armagh, the date of which event is assigned to the year 455. From this time he appears to have ceased in a measure from more arduous labours, and to have employed himself in holding synods for the settlement of the Church. Several of the canons enacted in these councils are still in existence, and they serve to elucidate many of the doctrines and customs of the early Irish Church. Whatever time St. Patrick could spare from these important avocations was passed in retirement at Saul, where, in prayer and meditation, he ended his days. He lived to an advanced age, and was buried near the site of the present cathedral of Down.

Several tracts have been ascribed to St. Patrick, two of which may be noticed in this place. The first is entitled, *The Confession of St. Patrick*.

¹ Ussher's Brit. Eccl. Antiq. cap. xvi. (Works, vol. vi. p. 355), and cap. xvii. p. 427.

It is a kind of autobiography, and is very probably genuine; certainly it is assigned to him in the Book of Armagh, a manuscript of the seventh century. His object in writing it was to return thanks to the Almighty for his singular mercies to himself and to the Irish people; and to confirm them in their faith, by proving that God had assisted him in a most extraordinary manner, for the purpose of effecting their conversion.¹

Another probably genuine work of St. Patrick is an *Epistle to the Christian Subjects of Coroticus*. This Coroticus, or Carodoc, was a Welsh chieftain, who, with a party of soldiers (some of whom were Christians), had murdered some recent converts of St. Patrick's, and had captured others, with the intention of selling them as slaves. In this letter, the justly incensed bishop pronounces the Christians implicated in such transactions to be excommunicated; and forbids any one to eat or drink in their company, until, with many tears, and sincere repentance, they had atoned for their crime, and had set at liberty the servants and handmaids of God, for whom Christ died and was crucified.²

From the obscure legends of his life, it is impossible to give an accurate sketch of the character of St. Patrick. His biographers tell us, that he was remarkable for the meekness and gentleness of

¹ Lanigan, vol. i. p. 349.

² The works attributed to St. Patrick may be seen in the *Opuscula S. Patricii*, Dub. 1835.

his disposition ; and from this, and some other fancied resemblances, they are fond of drawing a comparison between him and Moses. It is probably on this account that they represent him as having lived to the advanced age of 120 years. St. Patrick was an earnest preacher of the Gospel, pious, energetic, and full of zeal. His mind would appear to have been deeply imbued with the love of monastic institutions and of the eremetic life. He was neither a learned divine nor a pleasing writer, if it be fair to judge from the works attributed to him ; but he was a sincere and holy bishop in the Church of God, who performed the work of an evangelist in all honesty amongst the people of his adoption, and who committed to the Church (in the foundation of which he had so great a part) the same “tradition of the faith” as he had himself received from his Christian forefathers. Few of the ancient missionaries of the Church have been held in such reverent estimation by posterity ; and yet few have received so much injury from the legends and wild tales to which an over-zealous regard gave rise.

CHAPTER III.

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT IRISH.

BEFORE leaving St. Patrick, it may be well to say something respecting the doctrine and discipline which he was the chief instrument in introducing into Ireland. Historians have written much upon the religion of the ancient Irish; but it is to be feared that too many, drawn away by favourite theories, have, on this subject in particular, seen in the page of history the reflection of their own prejudices, rather than the true lesson it was intended to teach.

It was natural that St. Patrick should introduce into Ireland that religious system in which he himself had been trained; in other words, the whole Church-system of the fifth century, as he had learned it during his long sojourn in Gaul and other parts of the Continent. Its prominent features were, dutiful submission to the Church, a sincere love for holy Scripture, an intimate acquaintance with its letter, particularly the Psalms and New Testament, and a readiness to practise self-discipline fairly and fully. Few of those who thought at all seriously were content with a luke-warm religion and devotion to God. And if all

manifested great affection for the memories of the saints, and reverence for their relics, this was not as yet carried beyond the proper limits; nor was any sanction afforded to those unbecoming invocations which have since disfigured the public and private devotions of the faithful. Monasticism also was an essential portion of the Church-system of that age. Many who had the desire and opportunity to aim at a life of greater perfection than fell to the lot of all, placed themselves under monastic discipline. Secluded from the world, they passed their days in a continual course of prayer and psalmody, fasting, labour, and study.

The religious faith and discipline of the Church of the fifth century was then, in fact, extended to Ireland, after its conversion to Christianity. If there were any errors of doctrine, these were introduced also—the tares came with the wheat. Yet we cannot point to any erroneous dogmas that disfigured the creed of the early Irish Church. The practice of invoking the saints prevailed in the eighth century; but we know no evidence to prove that it obtained before that period. The doctrine of the eucharist was as yet uninjured by the interpretation of Paschase Radbert,¹ and that of pur-

¹ In the *Leabhar Breac* there is an Irish sermon on the Lord's Supper, supposed to have been written in the eighth century. I have seen extracts from it, of what were considered to be its strongest passages. They fully bear out the assertion made above. If the homily be not a translation from one of the fathers, it might be well worth the expense of publication.

gatory was unknown to the Irish Christians until still later times. But the very ancient custom of praying for the souls of those who had departed this life in the faith and fear of God certainly did receive the sanction of the primitive Irish Church. We learn this by implication from an old canon, attributed to one of St. Patrick's synods, which directed the eucharist not to be offered for any who died in sin. “Hear the apostle saying, *There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye should pray for it.* And, *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.* For he who deserved not to receive the sacrifice during his lifetime, how shall it help him after his death?”

It would appear to have been the judgment of the Irish Church, that baptism by laymen or schismatics was not invalid, provided the baptised person received, at the time of his baptism, “the tradition of the Creed.” That the iniquity of the sower does not contaminate the seed sown, was the principle on which this conclusion was founded.

The usual seasons for administering public baptism were Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Epiphany. The two former festivals were the recognised periods throughout the whole Church; but, so far as we know, Ireland was the only part of western Christendom where the feast of the Epiphany was superadded.

The canons relating to the discipline of the clergy were very strict. No clerk was to wander about

from place to place. In a strange diocese he was not to baptise, nor offer the eucharist, nor discharge any spiritual function. In like manner, no bishop was to presume to ordain in a diocese not his own, without the permission of its diocesan. However, as a mark of respect to his dignity, he was permitted to assist on the Lord's day in the offering of the eucharist. Should a clerk, through negligence, omit to attend the morning or evening collects, he was to be esteemed an alien. Should he once be excommunicated, he might be admitted again to communion, but could never recover his degree. A clerk coming from Britain without a letter of recommendation was not to be allowed the exercise of his ministry. If any clergyman received another who was excommunicated, both were to suffer the same punishment.

The laws of the Church were very severe against any Christian who followed the example of the heathen in consulting soothsayers, or believing any of their superstitions. In some cases, a year's penance, in others excommunication, was the punishment of this crime. And should a Christian be excommunicated, the Church directed that not even his alms were to be received. He was placed under the same ban as the heathen; for there was an express canon forbidding any alms offered by Gentiles (pagans) to be received into the Church. If a Christian sued another in a heathen court, and not before the Church, he was to be deprived of com-

munion. The same punishment was to fall upon all who were guilty of any flagrant sin. The people were called upon to pay due respect to their bishop, to assist him, and to minister to his wants ; and if any one should revile a good bishop, he was to do penance for seven days upon bread and water, after the example of Miriam murinuring against Moses.

It is impossible to determine with accuracy how far the practice of private confession was carried in the Irish Church. But there is no reason to doubt that the Christians in Ireland, as elsewhere, did, on frequent occasions, make private or public confession of their faults ; in order “that they might receive,” says Archbishop Ussher, “counsel and direction for their recovery, and be made partakers of the benefit of the keys, for the quieting of their troubled consciences.” Without question, many errors, subsequently introduced, did not then disfigure this wholesome ordinance. We frequently read in the lives of the Irish saints, of their confessing particular sins that oppressed their minds, and cheerfully accomplishing the imposed penance.¹ And in more than one monastic rule the practice is enjoined, and directions given about it.

The early Irish Christians paid great respect to the see of Rome, which was at that time superior to most other branches of the Church in piety, wealth, and zeal for the propagation of the faith.

¹ Vide Ussher, Religion of the Ancient Irish, chap. v.

Attracted by the report of its religious superiority, no less than by the natural desire to visit what all looked upon as an apostolical or mother Church, many Irish saints, from time to time, journeyed to the imperial city. Here they remained, frequenting the shrines of the apostles, or the tombs of the martyrs, and conversing with learned Christians from every part of the world. Still it is a remarkable circumstance, that no official intercourse was kept up between Rome and Ireland for many centuries ; and although the friendly feeling alluded to for a long time existed between the two Churches, yet there is no communion in the west whose history contains such decisive evidence of its ancient independence of the papal power.

The political constitution of pagan Ireland was a serious impediment to the beneficial progress of the Church. The government of the country was lodged in the power of three orders—the kings, or chief of the nobility ; the Druids and Olamhs, or learned men ; and, lastly, the artisans. The kings governed the different provinces and chieftainries into which the land was apportioned. They yielded a nominal submission to the chief monarch of the island, whose position somewhat resembled that of the emperors of Germany, and who was elected by the three orders from a certain royal family. There was no law of primogeniture among the ancient Irish ; and consequently almost all the officers of the state were elective. But the choice

of the electors was restricted to the members of particular families.

The Druids and Olamhs were the ministers of religion, the bards (*fileas* they were called in Irish), and other learned men, whose influence was very powerful among a people not less superstitious than romantic. The Irish appear to have always had a natural taste for learning, which they would undergo many privations to gratify. And it ever afforded them the greatest enjoyment to listen to the songs of their bards, singing the praises of some warrior chieftain, or discoursing upon the glories of their country. The power of the Druids and Olamhs was intended to balance that of the other two orders, with a view to prevent the one from invading the privileges of the other. But this scheme proved in the end a failure; partly from the lawlessness of the petty kings, but principally because the bardic order cared more for their own aggrandisement than for the rights of the poor. There was a national assembly periodically convened at Tara, at which the Druids, bards, and artisans, appeared by their representatives. Here the affairs of the nation were discussed, and such laws were enacted as the wisdom of the times suggested. The monarch presided in the assembly, and the petty princes attended its meetings.¹

Such was the constitution of Ireland at the time

¹ Charles O'Conor's *Dissertations on the History of Ireland*, pp. 48 57.

of the introduction of Christianity. At first sight it appears liable to few objections, and more skilfully devised than one would expect to find in so remote an island, and at such an early age. But it had one serious defect, which prevented it from becoming practically beneficial to the nation. The number of petty princes was by far too considerable for so small a country. Each chieftainry also was of itself almost an independent sovereignty ; and the ties that bound the local princes in allegiance to the monarch were so slight as to be easily broken upon the smallest provocation. The principle of an elective monarchy served likewise to keep the people in constant excitement. They split themselves into opposing factions and parties ; and rival chieftains were engaged in continual warfare with one another. Internal commotion was the evil of the country, against which the infant Church had to contend ; a formidable evil at all times, and doubly so in a rude and uncultivated nation. Most unequal, indeed, was such a contest ; the defence of the Church was in patience and in prayer. At one moment it would be caressed, while the next it was plundered. One chieftain would dedicate his lands to the service of religion, while another would lay them waste with the sword. It is true that the Church in other countries was often exposed to the like dangers ; but then the Christians of Ireland were without the support that was available for their brethren elsewhere. The power of the

emperors on the continent, for instance, was sufficient to control and overawe the turbulence of the petty barons ; and many struggling Churches received protection from the moral influence of Rome, long before she insisted on any exercise of undue power. This was not the case in Ireland, with which Rome had no connexion, and where the power of the monarch was all but nominal. In the midst of these disadvantages, however, the Church continued to gain ground, and to draw such numbers within its salutary influence, that Ireland was not inaptly termed “the island of saints.” Owing chiefly to political circumstances, its *parochial* organisation was neither so extensive or effective as its *monastic* ; the strictness of a monastery seemed in that age to possess attractions not to be resisted. Yet, in the midst of their severe lives, the monks were instrumental in promoting the civilisation of the Irish. Fixing their habitations in the deserts, which they cultivated with their own hands, they rendered them in the course of time the most delightful spots in the kingdom. Cities sprang up around their cells and churches ; and it is to them we owe so useful an institution in Ireland as bringing great numbers together in one civil community ; for hitherto it had been the custom of the Irish to live in tents or huts, thinly scattered over the pastoral and mountain districts.¹

¹ See Charles O’Conor’s Dissertations, &c., p. 203.

CHAPTER IV.

BENIGNUS SUCCEEDS PATRICK—EARLY MONASTIC FOUNDATIONS—ST. BRIDGIT—CHURCH OF KILDARE—SCHOOL OF CLONARD—ST. SINAN—MONASTERY OF BANGOR—CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY—IRISH BISHOPRICS.

BENEN, or Benignus, succeeded to the see of Armagh upon the death of Patrick, although, in the opinion of some writers, the government of the Church was consigned to him during the lifetime of that prelate. He was converted in early youth to the Christian faith, and was St. Patrick's most constant companion through the entire course of his mission. There are several poems regulating the tributes and privileges of the monarchs and provincial kings of Ireland still extant in the Irish language.¹ These have been ascribed to Benignus, and are some proof that the church had so far advanced in his time, as to be permitted to take an interest in the civil affairs of the country. Benignus was succeeded by Iarlath, and he again by Cormac; upon whose death the government of the Church devolved upon Duach or Dubtach.

During the incumbency of these prelates, the

¹ They are in the *Book of Lecan*, a ms. in the possession of the Royal Irish Academy.

number of schools and monastic foundations was considerably increased. St. Patrick had already established a school at Armagh, which eventually became so distinguished, that most of the clergy received their education in it.¹ Many of his immediate disciples embraced the monastic life, and gathered round them others that were similarly disposed. A portion of their time was devoted to the instruction of the young, and of all who were anxious to learn the Christian doctrines. In point of fact, the great proportion of our monasteries in ancient times, Archbishop Ussher assures us, "were so many colleges of learned divines, whereunto the people did usually resort for instruction, and from whence the Church was wont continually to be supplied with able ministers; the benefit whereof was not only contained within the limits of this island, but did extend itself to foreign countries likewise."²

Provision was also made for those religious women whom inclination prompted (in the language of that day) "to forsake all, and to follow Christ." Societies were formed, where such persons as were approved might be admitted to live in retirement from the world. Their food was simple, their clothing coarse; and the time that was not occupied in prayer and psalmody was devoted to the care of the sick, and the relief of those who were in want. The

¹ Harris and Ware's Antiquities, chap. xxxvii.

² Religion of the Ancient Irish, chap. vi.

members of these societies were bound to celibacy; and the canons of the Church denounced the punishment of excommunication against any who violated this engagement. Of these establishments, the most distinguished was the convent of Kildare,¹ which was erected about A.D. 480. Its founder was St. Bridgit, a virgin whose life was one unwearied course of piety and devotion. She was also instrumental in procuring a bishop for the district surrounding her establishment, where a large concourse of people shortly settled, attracted, as is said, by the fame of her good works. Adjoining her convent was a church, designed principally for the use of the sisterhood, of which the following description has been left us by a writer of the eighth or ninth century:²—

“ As the number of the faithful of both sexes increased, the church extended over a wide surface of ground, and rose above to an imposing elevation. It was adorned with paintings, and contained under one roof three spacious oratories, separated by boarded screens, while one wall, at the eastern end of the church, ran across the whole breadth, from side-wall to side-wall, richly ornamented with painted figures,

¹ *Kill-dara*, the cell of the oak; so called because the ancient church was adjacent to a large oak-tree.

² Cogitosus, author of the Life of St. Bridgit. He is supposed by Colgan and others to belong to the sixth century; but Lanigan, with more probability, conjectures the beginning of the ninth. Vide Cogitosi Vita S. Bridgid. cap. xxxv. (Colgan's Tr. Th. p. 523).

and hanging tapestries. This had two portals, one at either extremity. Through that upon the right, the prelate, with his regular college, and those who are appointed to the holy ministrations, and to offer the sacred sacrifices of the Lord, are wont to approach the sanctuary and the altar. Through the other portal, on the left of the aforesaid cross-wall, none enter but the abbess with her maidens, and the faithful widows, in order to enjoy the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Another wall, dividing the pavement of the church into two equal parts, stretches from the east end until it meets a transverse wall, which crosses the breadth of the building. This church contains many windows, and one ornamental door in the right side, through which the faithful of the male sex enter; and another on the left, by which the congregation of virgins and faithful women is accustomed to come in. Thus, in one great church, a vast number of people, of different rank, and degree, and sex, and place—partitions being interposed between the several divisions—in various order, but with one heart, make their prayers to the Lord God Omnipotent.”

But it was in the sixth century that the Irish were especially active in the erection of schools and monasteries, some of which sent forth afterwards into distant lands many zealous missionaries and learned men. The school of Clonard deserves our particular notice, because it was long a kind of university in the country, and many of the ancient

saints received their education within its walls. This school¹ was erected A.D. 520, and its founder's name was Finian, a learned native of Leinster. His early years were passed in Britain, in the society of the Welsh saints, David, Cadoc, and others. Returning at length into Ireland, he brought with him some religious Britons, by whose assistance he was enabled to establish his school at Clonard. "The fame of his good works," a writer of his life informs us, "attracted thither illustrious men from all quarters of the island, partly with a view to study the sacred Scriptures, and partly to gain a more perfect acquaintance with the discipline and doctrine of the Church." And we often read in the Lives of the Saints, that such an one came to St. Finian to learn the holy Scriptures; or that another spent much time at Clonard, making great proficiency in different kinds of sacred learning. The number of persons who flocked to Clonard soon raised it into some importance. It became a village, or "city," and was afterwards made the seat of the bishopric of Meath.

Finian died at Clonard, in A.D. 552. An old writer has left us the following sketch of his character:—"He was full of wisdom, as a scribe most learned to teach the law of God's commandments. He was most merciful and compassionate,

¹ Colgan (AA. SS. p. 405) gives a long catalogue of the disciples of St. Finian. He has also (p. 406) a list of the bishops and abbots of Clonard, and of other holy men who are buried there, extending to the year 1150.

and sincerely sympathised with the infirmities of the sick, and the sorrows of the afflicted; and in every work of mercy he was most ready with his assistance. He healed with mildness the mental and bodily ills of all who came to him. Towards himself he exercised the strictest discipline, *to leave to others a good example*. He loved all from a pure heart. He abhorred all carnal and mental vices. His ordinary food was bread and herbs, his drink water; but on the festivals of the Church, he ate bread made of corn, and drank a cup of ale, or whey. When obliged to take moderate repose, he slept not on a soft and easy couch, but rather on the bare ground, with a stone for his pillow. In a word, he was full of compassion toward all other men, but of strictness and severity to himself.”¹

About fifteen years after the establishment of Finian’s school, a monastery was erected at Inis-Scattery—an island near the mouth of the Shannon—by an anchorite bishop named Sinan, or Senanus. The monastic rule of this prelate was a very severe one; and he appears to have introduced a strange law, prohibiting the residence of any female on the island belonging to his monastery. An old catalogue² divides the Irish saints into three orders: the first of which was distinguished from the other two, not only by the celebration of the one office, and

¹ Vita St. Finian,—Colgan’s AA. SS. p. 397.

² Ussher’s Brit. Eccl. Antiq. cap. xvii. (Works, vol. vi. p. 477).

the observance of the same Easter, but also by not refusing (as the saints of the two other classes did) the service and company of women. Sinan was among the first to depart from this custom of the chief and more holy “order,” and to introduce a rule so much opposed to the true spirit of Christianity.

In the Life of this bishop it is said, that as he was sojourning for some time on the Isle of Inis-carra, near Cork, a vessel came to shore, in which were fifty monks, who had been attracted to Ireland by the desire of a stricter life, and a better knowledge of Scripture, than they seemed to think attainable any where else; and it was their wish to place themselves under the control of certain holy fathers, whom they had understood to be renowned both for sanctity of life and rigour of monastic discipline. This is the first instance we meet with of foreign Christians settling in Ireland for the sake of religious advancement; but it is far from being a single case. It soon became an usual custom (with the youth of Britain especially) to spend many of their early years in the retirement of the Irish monasteries, studying holy Scripture, the writings of the fathers, and such other branches of learning as were considered worthy their attention.

But we must not pass over without notice the monastery of Bangor, or Benchor, in the county of Down, the most celebrated of all the Irish conventional establishments. It was founded in 559, by

St. Comgall, a learned and holy man; and, according to the testimony of St. Bernard, it was “a place in the truest sense holy, and abounding in holy men.” Most of the missionaries from Ireland were trained in this institution, which is said to have been the parent of numerous similar foundations, and to have produced many thousand monks. There is reason to believe, that what has been recorded concerning one of its offshoots was no less true of itself—that, owing to the multitude of its monks, the divine offices used to be performed without any interruption—the choirs succeeding one another in turn—so that their praises ceased not for one moment, either day or night.¹

Among the bishops of Armagh in this century (the sixth), one of them, named Ailild, is particularly noticed as a married man. Carbre, his son, was the father of Finian, the first bishop and abbot of Moville, a man highly praised for his humble and holy life. There are no other recorded examples of a married bishop in those early times in Ireland;² although an old canon of St. Patrick makes especial mention of “the wife of a clerk,” as if the marriage of the clergy were quite an ordinary custom. But

¹ St. Bernard, in his Life of St. Malachy, has recorded this of the monastery of Luxeuil. There is the strongest reason for supposing it to be equally true of the monastery of Bangor.

² Colgan (AA. SS. p. 62) says that Ailild was separated from his wife, “ab uxoris lege solutus,” before he took orders. If this be true (and it is only fair to receive it with hesitation), there is no recorded instance of any married clergyman being in Ireland before the twelfth century.

it is not at all surprising that few should be found to avail themselves of this implied permission to marry, when it is remembered how much the general feeling of the whole Church was opposed to the notion of a married clergy; and that in Ireland especially this principle would naturally receive strength, from the more than ordinary attachment to a monastic life prevalent in that country. Yet it must not be imagined that the clergy were restrained from marriage by any enforced vow of celibacy. Such a vow was obligatory upon none, except those who entered the conventional houses. There was nothing to prevent any clergyman from contracting marriage, except the voice of public opinion, which was certainly not favourable to the custom.

Perhaps it was owing to this *general* practice of celibacy in the clergy, that we find so many of the Irish bishops undertaking the care of religious houses in addition to their own peculiar spheres of duty; it being, doubtless, agreeable to their dispositions to spend their strict and *regular* lives amongst those who were similarly bound. Of the many bishoprics that were founded about this period, a large proportion owed their origin to these abbot-bishops, who, first collecting around them a society of monks, afterwards undertook the spiritual government of the adjacent districts. This was the case with the monastery of Clonmaenoise, the seven churches of Glendaloch, and other establishments. Yet the boundaries of these districts, or the dioceses them-

selves, were not very distinctly marked out. The circumstances of the country, and the frequently precarious condition of the Church, prevented any well-defined arrangement, until a period much later than that which is engaging our attention at present. But perhaps in this respect the Irish Church did not differ considerably from other communions in very early times.

There prevailed, however, in Ireland a custom that in evil times was productive of some injury to religion. If a man were remarkable for the sanctity of his life, the extent of his learning, or for any other similar circumstance, it seems to have been the practice with metropolitans to confer on him the episcopal dignity as a reward for his merits, without committing to him the charge of any district. In fact, it was not supposed that such persons would discharge any of the ordinary duties of the episcopate (except to confer orders upon some whom they themselves wished to honour), for they were generally ascetics and anchorites, living under the severest rule. And so long as the dignity was bestowed only upon the holiest and most distinguished divines, it would, perhaps, be presumptuous in us to find fault with the custom; but when disorder came into the Church, when the love of many began to wax cold, it will be seen, in a subsequent part of this history, of what mischief and confusion it was the occasion.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE OF ST. COLUM-CILLE — CHARACTER OF HIS
SUCCESSIONS — ADAMNAN.

ONE of the most distinguished saints of the ancient Church in Ireland was Columb-cille, or Columba of the Churches, the apostle, as he has been called, of the northern districts of Scotland. He flourished in the sixth century; and it may be interesting to record somewhat particularly the principal circumstances of his eventful life.

St. Columba was born at Gartan, in the county of Donegal, about the year of our Lord 522. His baptismal name was Crimthan; but in consequence of the remarkable mildness of his disposition and the gentleness of his manners, he has ever been sur-named Columba, or the Dove. Like other religious youths of his age, it was natural that he should early seek admission into one of the monastic colleges; and accordingly we find him first studying in the monastery of Moville, over which an abbot named Finian then presided. He continued here until his admission to deacon's orders, when he placed himself under the care of Germanus, or Gorman, who was at that period considered a distinguished instructor of the young; and before he completed his

studies, he spent some time at the school of Clonard, whose celebrity has been noticed already. The life he passed in these schools was a very strict one. Emulous of evangelic perfection, and inflamed with the love of Christ, he, as well as the other religious youths, used to pass their days in voluntary poverty, in vigils, fastings, and heavenly contemplation. The time that was not occupied in acts of piety or in study was employed in labouring with their hands for their daily food.

St. Columba commenced his public career by the foundation of the abbey of Derry, in the year 546. This was only the first of a great number of monastic houses and churches which owed their erection to his instrumentality. Indeed, so numerous are they said to have been, that from this circumstance he received the addition of “cille” to his name, and is now usually known as Columb-cille, or Columb of the Churches.

It was about the year 551 when Columba was admitted to the priesthood; and it requires to be noticed that he never rose to the episcopal degree, although few, perhaps, were better qualified for this sacred office. This circumstance, apparently so strange, is thus accounted for in an old legend:—Columba (says the writer), while still only a deacon, was sent to a certain Bishop Etchen to be raised to the episcopal order. Etchen would appear to have been one of those anchorite bishops about whom something

was said in the last chapter.¹ He was ploughing in the field when Columba arrived at his cell; and as soon as he heard the name of his visitor, the bishop left his simple occupation to bid him welcome. Nor, when informed of the object of his visit, did Etchen hesitate for a moment compliance with his request. He immediately proceeded to the solemn ceremony of the ordination; but (continues the legend), owing to some oversight, he fixed on the wrong office, and instead of consecrating him a bishop, only ordained him a priest. On discovering his mistake, Etchen offered to go on regularly; but Columba declined, and attributing the occurrence to some providential interference, expressed his resolution to remain in the order of the priesthood during the rest of his life.²

Whatever difficulties may attend the reception of this story, there is reason to believe it true in all important particulars; and it tends to prove the existence in Ireland of the evil custom censured in the Nicene council, of one bishop consecrating another without the assistance of coadjutors. It also leads us to conjecture, that deacons in the Irish Church were occasionally advanced to the highest degree without being required to be ordained priests—a practice not at all opposed to the decisions of the

¹ Etchen is said to have been bishop of the place now called Clonfad, in Westmeath.

² O'Donnell, *Vita S. Colum.* l. i. cap. 47. Colgan's Tr. Th. p. 397.

Catholic Church, and which was followed elsewhere in the case of several remarkable prelates.¹

Some time after his ordination, St. Columba set forth, with twelve companions, on his eventful expedition to the highlands of Scotland. He arrived in that country in the year 563, and fixed his abode on the small island of Iona, the grant of which he had received from Conall, king of the Dal-aradian Scots.² Here he erected a monastery, and commenced his labours for the conversion of the Picts. These were attended with so much success, that his fame spread through every part of Britain; and the monastery of Iona became in time the chief seat of learning and piety in the Western Isles. But after some years of anxious exertion, his attention was diverted from the care of his converts to the social troubles of Ireland. There was a dispute between Aid, the king of Ireland, and his kinsman Aidan, king of the Albanian Scots, respecting the right of possession to the territory of Dal-aradia. Both sovereigns laid a claim to it: the Scottish prince asserting that the land in dispute belonged to him by right of hereditary succession; while the Irish monarch

¹ Bingham gives several instances of deacons being ordained bishops in this manner—e. g. St. Athanasius of Alexandria, Vigilius of Rome, &c. St. Ambrose and St. Cyprian were ordained bishops from being mere laymen. (Antiq. book ii. ch. x. sects. 5 and 7.)

² The Dal-aradian Scots were the Scots (or Irish) who had migrated from the territory of Dal-aradia, in the north of Ireland, and settled in the modern Scotland.

was unwilling that a foreign prince should enjoy any sovereignty in his dominions. And, in addition to the dangers that thus threatened the integrity of the kingdom, the overgrown power of the fileas, or bards, greatly obstructed its internal tranquillity. Their rude rhymes were very acceptable to the Irish populace, who would never grow wearied of listening to their panegyrics on the national valour, or the heroic deeds of some favourite warrior. The bards were not slow in marking the effect of their songs upon the people—how the popular attention was riveted, and their enthusiasm excited ; but they made use of their acquired influence for the very worst ends. Intent only upon enriching themselves, they did not hesitate to defame those who would not purchase their good-will with costly presents ; and, protected as they were by the favour of the people, they seemed conscious that no harm could happen to their persons. They therefore increased in licentious boldness, and by the virulence of their satirical verses wounded many of the influential chieftains of the day, who bore with the evil until it appeared no longer endurable.

To find some remedy for this abuse, as well as to settle the affair about the Dal-aradian territory, an assembly of the states of the kingdom was convened at Drum-ceat, in the county of Derry, in the year 590. The council consisted of the Irish monarch, the nobles, and the clergy, who, since the conversion of the island to the Christian faith, had in a great

measure succeeded to the political privileges of the pagan Druids. Columba came over from Iona to attend the council, and by his mediation succeeded in preserving the order of the bards from the sentence of abolition contemplated by the king and nobles. He conceived that no good end could result from the extinction of an order so intimately connected with the manners of the people; and therefore proposed that, instead of extirpating them altogether, the assembly should be satisfied with correcting their excesses, and enacting laws for their more effectual control in future. To this proposal there was at first some little opposition, but it was in the end unanimously conceded to. The Dal-aradian dispute was also arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. By the advice of St. Columba, the whole matter was left to the arbitration of a holy person named Colman, who gave it as his decision, that the province—so far as the payment of tribute and similar affairs was concerned—ought to be subject to the Irish monarch; but that the Scots, as being themselves the descendants of the Dal-aradians, might call upon them for aid and assistance in times of just necessity. And the readiness with which this decision was acquiesced in, is a proof of the estimation in which the integrity of religious men was then held, as well as of the extensive power that was on more than one occasion conceded to them.¹

¹ Vide O'Donnell, *Vita S. Columc.* l. iii. cap. 1-11. Colgan's *Tr. Th.* p. 430, &c.

Upon the breaking up of the council, Columba proceeded to visit some of his Irish monasteries; and after completing his inspection of them, returned to his favourite residence at Iona. Here he ended his days on the 9th of June, in the year 597. His remains were buried in Iona; but at a subsequent period are said to have been translated to Ireland, and placed in the same tomb with that of Patrick and Bridgit, at Downpatrick.

The countenance of Columba (says the most distinguished of his biographers)¹ resembled that of an angel. In conversation he was brilliant, in work holy, in disposition excellent, in council distinguished. Although he lived on earth, yet he shewed himself furnished with heavenly manners. Every hour of his life was passed either in prayer, or reading, or writing, or some useful occupation. His fastings and watchings, also, were unwearied. Yet, in the midst of all these austeries, he ever preserved a cheerful countenance, and was beloved by all who were brought into intercourse with him.

St. Columba used to employ many of his hours at Iona in transcribing copies of the Gospels, and other parts of Holy Scripture. He was engaged in copying out a psalter on the very day of his death, and had got so far as the 10th verse of the 34th Psalm—*“They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good”*—when, foreseeing his approach-

¹ Adamnan, Praef. ad Vitam S. Columc. Colgan's Tr. Th. p. 337.

ing dissolution, he stopped and said, “Let Baithen (meaning his successor) finish the rest.”¹ There are still in existence two manuscripts of the Gospels that are said to have been copied by him. One of these is a small manuscript called the “Book of Durrow,” because it once belonged to the monastery of that place; the other is a much larger one, known as the “Book of Kells,” and is, perhaps, one of the most beautiful manuscripts at present in preservation. Both these copies of the Gospels are in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. Whether they were really written by Columba, it is impossible to say; but if they were not, they are at least the work of some of the monks of his Irish monasteries. Columba is likewise said to have composed some Latin and Irish hymns, many of which are still extant.² The following is a translation of the shortest of these Latin hymns, which was written soon after the foundation of his first monastery at Derry, and is consequently one of his earliest attempts:—

“ Hear us, O God ! whom we adore,
And bid Thy thunders cease to roar ;
Nor let the lightning’s ghastly glare
Affright Thy servants to despair.

¹ Adamnan, l. iii. cap. 23. (Colgan’s Tr. Th. p. 369.)

² They are in the very ancient Irish ms. called the “Liber Hymnorum,” preserved in the University Library at Dublin. Colgan (Tr. Th. p. 473) has printed three of them. A Psalter, written by St. Columba—supposed to be the same which was the cause of the battle of Culdremne—is in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy.

Thee, mighty God, we humbly fear ;
 With Thee no rival durst compare :
 In loftier strains than earth can raise
 Thee angels' choirs unceasing praise :
 Thy name fills heaven's high courts above,
 And echoes tell Thy wondrous love.

Jesu ! Thy love creation sings,
 Most upright, holy, King of kings ;
 For ever blest shalt Thou remain,
 Ruling with truth Thy wide domain.

The Baptist who prepared Thy way,
 Ere he beheld the light of day,
 Strengthened with grace from God on high,
 Rejoic'd to know Thy day drew nigh.

Though strength was gone, and nature fail'd,
 God's aged priest by prayer prevail'd ;
 A son was given—a Prophet came,
 The great Messias to proclaim.

The gems that shine with dazzling light
 Upon a cup of silver bright,
 Resemble, faintly though it be,
 The love, my God, I bear to Thee."

The successors of St. Columba in the government of Iona were for a long series of years distinguished for their continence, their love of God, their strict discipline, and diligent observance of the precepts of the sacred writings.¹ Their monastery, likewise, sent forth many disinterested and successful missionaries. Among these St. Aidan and St. Finan hold, perhaps,

¹ Bede, l. iii. cap. 4.

the first place. “They deserve,” says Archbishop Ussher, “to be honoured by the English nation with as venerable a remembrance as (I do not say Wilfrid and Cuthbert, but) Austin the monk, and his followers. For by the ministry of Aidan was the kingdom of Northumberland recovered from paganism; and by the means of Finan, not only the kingdom of the East Saxons regained, but also the large kingdom of Mercia converted first unto Christianity.”¹

Adamnan, abbot of Iona,² is the next who claims our notice. He flourished during the seventh century, and is praised by Venerable Bede as a good and wise man, well skilled in the knowledge of Holy Scripture. But he is principally known to posterity as the writer of the “Life of Colum-cille,” a work valuable for its topographical allusions, but scarcely deserving the dignity of a biography. It is rather a legendary narrative, in three books, of the prophecies that Columba is reported to have uttered—of the miracles ascribed to him—and the angelic visions with which he has been favoured by tradition. It may appear strange that a religious and sober person, such as Adamnan, should have undertaken to record stories, many of which could scarcely be true. But the age in which he lived was not a sceptical one. It was the universal opinion that the Almighty favoured His saints and servants, by shewing forth His

¹ Ussher’s Religion of the Ancient Irish, chap. x.

² Now called St. Eunan (representing the Irish pronunciation of Adamnan), patron of Raphoe.

power through their instrumentality; and no religious person ever thought of calling in question the truth of a miracle. No doubt, it had been better for the future interests of the Church had this been done occasionally—had our ancestors in the faith required better evidence in support of the truth, in order to prevent (if possible) falsehood from passing as its counterfeit. But a sufficient excuse for Adamnan is the fact, that all miraculous stories were at that time received with little or no hesitation. This is enough to exonerate him from the charge of invention or imposition, which so many persons are fond of advancing against ancient writers. He recorded what he had heard, and what he had reason to believe was true; and if affection for the founder of his order, combined with the child-like faith of his age, caused him now and then to fall into a mistake, who is so hard-hearted as to condemn him severely?

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTROVERSY RESPECTING EASTER.

DURING the lifetime of Adamnan, the Irish Church was greatly harassed by internal contests respecting the proper period for celebrating the paschal solemnity. It had long been the practice in Ireland to observe the festival of Easter upon the 14th day of the first vernal month (if a Sunday), instead of adopting the more general custom of deferring its celebration, in all cases, until the Sunday following the 14th. The origin of this difference may be traced back to the times of St. Patrick, who brought along with him the astronomical calculations and cycles that were made use of by the Gallican Church to determine their moveable feasts. These corresponded in almost every particular with the calculations then followed at Rome, which were exceedingly defective and inaccurate. But the Roman Church, soon perceiving this, adopted a system less liable to mistakes.¹ Most other Churches received the improvements of Rome without hesitation. In Britain and Ireland alone the

¹ Vide Ussher's Brit. Eccl. Antiq. cap. xvii. (Works, vol. vi. p. 492-510.) Prideaux's Connexion, vol. ii. p. 248 et seq.

old calculations were adhered to. At first it was in ignorance that any changes had been made elsewhere. No official intercourse being kept up between Rome and these Christians of the West, the errors of their system were not pointed out to them until it was almost too late. For after the observance of several generations, they began to look upon their calculations and cycles as a sacred legacy from their Christian forefathers, which it would be worse than ungrateful in them to alter or give up.

As soon as it became known at Rome, that the Irish Church was irregular in its observance of Easter, the bishops of that see endeavoured to enforce upon it the necessity of conforming to the practice of the rest of the Church. In the year 629, Honorius I. wrote to the Irish prelates, exhorting them to correct what was erroneous in their system, and not to be led astray by a notion of their superiority to other Churches.¹ For Laurence, archbishop of Canterbury, had already directed their attention to the danger threatened by their irregularity to the unity of the Church; but his admonitions were unsuccessful, and he himself was treated by some Irish bishops with great disrespect. More attention, however, was paid to the remonstrance of the Pope. Upon the receipt of his letter, a provincial synod was held at a place called Campo-Lene, now Old Leighlin.² It was

¹ Bede, l. ii. cap. 19.

² Ussher's Brit. Eccl. Antiq. cap. xvii (Works, vol. vi. p. 503.)

numerously attended by the bishops and clergy of the south of Ireland, and was presided over by the Bishop of Emly, whose see at that time ranked next to Armagh. Both sides had their respective advocates at the synod. Fintan, abbot of Taghmon, defended the usage of the Irish; and Laserian, abbot of Leighlin, the more Catholic system. There was a great deal of argument and discussion; and at last it was resolved to send certain messengers to Rome, who were to observe at what time the Christians collected there from all parts of the world celebrated the feast of Easter, and to bring back a report to the synod. These deputies accordingly set out on their mission, and returning in the third year after, gave in their report in these words: "Throughout the whole world it is the Roman Easter that is observed." They saw Greek and Hebrew, Scythian and Egyptian, assemble together under one roof (in the Church of St. Peter) to celebrate this feast at the same time; and so great was the error of the Irish system, that it differed by an entire month from the received reckoning of the rest of the Church.¹

This report was satisfactory to the Christians in the south. The province under the government of the Bishop of Emly, adopted, in consequence, the Roman method; but the northern prelates, together with the monks of Iona and the Irish clergy in Britain, still adhered to their ancient calculations. Several attempts were made to bring them over to a right

¹ Cummian, Epist. ad Segienum,—Ussher, Sylloge, Ep. xi.

view of the case, but without success. Cummian, a learned monk of Durrow, endeavoured to point out to them the error of their system, and the danger they were in of falling into schism ; but the strong popular party in favour of the Irish system were too much blinded by prejudice to listen to his reasoning. In the heat of controversy, the whole matter was much magnified. The Irish party thought they were defending a point of the greatest importance to sound faith and doctrine ; and regarded all who favoured the European system as heretics and schismatics. The monks of Iona thought with their brethren in Ireland ; and were so deeply wedded to their old customs, as to turn a deaf ear even to the entreaties of their abbot, Adamnan, who was one of those that endeavoured to convince them of their error. At length, in the year 664, the Anglo-Saxon synod at Whitby decided in favour of the Roman Easter ; and its decision, in effect, compelled those who would not submit, to return to Iona or Ireland. Here they persevered in following “ the tradition of their fathers,” as they used to call their custom, until the year 716 ; when, through the instrumentality of Egberct, a British monk, this long and sore division was finally healed.¹ There can be no doubt that the Irish Christians placed themselves in a very false

¹ At least so far as England was concerned, but it continued in Wales for some time longer. (See Ussher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, chap. x.) The tonsure-question was always discussed along with this subject. (Ussher, Brit. Ecccl. Antiqu. cap. xvii.,—Works, vol. vi. p. 487.)

position by opposing the judgment of Rome and other Churches ; and had not the mercy of God interposed, their obstinacy might have produced the most fatal consequences to religion. But one must not judge them too harshly. This was almost the only point on which affection for their Christian fathers carried them into error. In all other respects, the monks and clergy of Ireland continued as yet faithful servants of God. Those who lived in Iona and in Britain — such as Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne¹ — were especially remarkable for the temperance and innocence of their lives. The Venerable Bede tells us² that their whole solicitude was to serve God, and not the world ; their whole care to attend to their heart, and not their appetites. And so great was the respect paid to them in consequence, that every monk and clergyman was held in the highest estimation. Their arrival in any village was received with delight. The people would run up to them, and with bowed head rejoice to receive the sign of the cross from their hands, or a blessing from their lips. They would diligently, also, listen to their exhortations ; and, on Sundays, repair to the church or

¹ Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who took so active a part in the synod of Whitby, returned to Ireland, after the decision of King Oswi was given against him. Several of the Anglo-Saxons came along with him. He founded two monasteries ; one at Inisbofinde for the Irish monks, and another at Mayo for the Saxons. Hence Mayo is called to this day, amongst the Irish, “ Mayo of the Saxons.”

² Hist. Eccl. l. iii cap. 26.

monasteries to hear the word of God. Nor had the priests and clergy any other objects in visiting the villages than the care of souls.

“ How beautiful your presence ! how benign,
Servants of God ! who not a thought will share
With the vain world ; who outwardly as bare
As winter-trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine !
Such priest, when service worthy of his care,
Has called him forth to breathe the common air,
Might seem a saintly image from its shrine
Descended. Happy are the eyes that meet
The apparition ; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand ;
Whence grace, through which the heart can understand,
And vows that bind the will, in silence made.”¹

¹ Wordsworth.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. COLUMBANUS—THE CULDEES—AENGUS THE HAGIOLOGIST.

IRELAND sent forth monks and clergy into many other countries besides Britain. Among these a high rank is due to the holy Columbanus, who, besides his monastic virtues, is distinguished as a writer intimately connected with the theology of our Church. Columbanus was the son of respectable parents in the province of Leinster, and was born about the year 539. By the advice of a woman who had for fifteen years been living an eremite life, he left his native district, and placed himself under the care of a venerable person named Senile, whose singular piety and acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures had procured for him a high reputation. While under the care of this instructor, Columbanus is said to have composed an exposition of the Psalms, together with some other tracts. He quitted Senile, to enter the monastery of Bangor in the county of Down, where he became a monk, and remained for some years, under the government of its abbot, Comgall; but conceiving a desire to settle in a foreign land, he obtained a reluctant permission from the abbot; and, with twelve companions, set out on his way to

France. Arriving here, after a short delay he fixed his abode in the forest of the Vosges, where he converted the ruins of an old fort called Anegray into a shelter sufficient for himself and his companions. But this place was not able to contain the numbers who soon sought to join his society; and accordingly he was obliged to provide for their accommodation by the erection of two other monastic houses within the forest; one at Luxeuil, the other at Fontaine. Columbanus presided in person over Luxeuil, and the other two were governed by his deputies or priors. For twenty years he continued, with his monks, to serve God in these monasteries. But his retirement was disturbed by some ecclesiastical disputes, into which he was unfortunately drawn; and he thus failed to conciliate the good-will and approbation of the Gallican bishops. Columbanus was one of those who were very strict in observing the Irish method of computing the paschal term. Although sojourning in a country where a different system was adopted, he could not be persuaded to lay aside the custom of his own Church; and this naturally gave offence to the clergy of Gaul, who looked upon his conduct as tending to a breach of unity. Accordingly, a synod was convened to consider what course should be adopted with respect to him. Columbanus was summoned to attend; but, instead of doing so, he addressed a letter to the Gallican bishops, in which the Irish paschal system was defended with much ingenuity. He thanks God that they had met upon

his account, and expresses a wish that, in accordance with the canons, their synods were held more frequently. He implores them to investigate which tradition more nearly approached the truth; theirs, or that which he followed—"the tradition of their brethren in the west." He tells them that he had already passed twelve years in the midst of their forest, near the remains of seventeen of his brother-monks, who there rested in peace. "Let Gaul," he adds, "receive us all, whom the kingdom of heaven shall receive, if we be found worthy. For we have one kingdom promised, and one hope of our calling in Christ, with whom we shall reign together, if only we first suffer with Him, that with Him we may be glorified." And, in conclusion, he exhorts them to pray for him, "since we are all members of the one body, whether Gauls, or Britons, or Irish."

It is not known what decision the Gallican synod came to respecting Columbanus. It is probable, however, that the estimation in which his virtues and piety were held, prevailed upon the assembled prelates to overlook his irregularity for the present, in the hope that he himself would in time correct it.

Columbanus addressed another epistle, partly upon this Easter-question, to St. Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome. There is one passage in it especially deserving our attention. But, first, it must be premised that he is alluding in it to two reformers of the paschal cycles—Anatolius, bishop of Laodicea, and Victorius, presbyter of Limoges.

The former, in the year 276, substituted a new cycle of nineteen years for the old and most faulty Jewish cycle of eighty-four years. This improvement, although only a slight one, was generally received in the eastern, and for some time in the western Church, until the Roman see, through jealousy of the East, returned to the defective calculation of eighty-four years. But Hilarius, bishop of Rome, at last directed Victorius of Limoges to undertake the reformation of their paschal term; who accordingly re-introduced into the western Church the cycle of nineteen years, with some additional improvements of his own. Columbanus rejected the calculations of Victorius, as unauthorised and novel, notwithstanding the approval of the Roman see: and he appears to have believed that the paschal system of the Irish Church agreed with that recommended by Anatolius, the Eastern bishop. In this, however, he made a mistake; for the Irish Church followed the old Jewish cycle of eighty-four years, reformed, in some slight degree, by Sulpicius Severus, a Gallican presbyter. Columbanus was also of opinion that St. Jerome advocated the Anatolian system. Speaking, then, of these two reformers of the paschal cycles, he thus addresses the pope:—"Therefore, either excuse or condemn your Victorius. Knowing this, that should you applaud him, the matter of the faith will lie between you and Jerome, who, without doubt, praised Anatolius, instead of this writer; so that whoever follows the one, cannot receive the other. Let

thy vigilance, therefore, take care, that in proving the faith of the two aforesaid authors, the one contrary to the other, in the sentence to be given, there be no discordance between you and Jerome, lest we be in perplexity on every side whether to agree with you or with him. In this, spare the weak, lest you manifest the scandal of disagreement; for I plainly acknowledge to you, that any one coming in opposition to the authority of Saint Jerome with the Churches of the West will be considered a heretic, or one to be rejected; for they accommodate their faith in divine Scriptures to his teaching in every thing without hesitation."

Two inferences may be drawn from this passage, tending to throw light upon the religious system of the ancient Irish. First of all, the authority of St. Jerome was so highly esteemed amongst them, that they professed an unhesitating obedience to his teaching; and, secondly (according to the statement of Columbanus), in doubtful cases, they would prefer the decision of St. Jerome to that of the Roman bishop for the time being, if the one were at variance with the other.

In addition to the uneasiness caused him by this paschal controversy, Columbanus suffered much persecution from Theuderic, the wicked king of Burgundy, who, after subjecting him to many petty annoyances, drove him at last from the monastery of Luxeuil. Having wandered about for a little, and spent some time at Milan, Columbanus erected a

monastery at Bobbio, in the Apennines, where he found a ruined church, dedicated in memory of St. Peter. Here he passed the short remainder of his life. He died on the 21st of November, A.D. 615. The monasteries of Bobbio and Luxeuil became afterwards most distinguished, and trained up within their walls many illustrious servants of the Church.¹

Columbanus appears from his works to have been conversant with the heathen classics, as well as the writings of the fathers. He was an assiduous author. In addition to the commentary on the Psalms, and the two epistles already alluded to, he wrote a treatise against the Arians of Milan, some short sermons or "instructions," a few poems, a monastic rule and penitential, and three epistles. The most important of all his letters is addressed to Pope Boniface IV. It was written at the request of Agilulf, king of the Lombards, who, although an Arian, urged Columbanus (to his great astonishment, as he informs us), to use his exertions towards quieting the religious disorders of his dominions. These disorders originated partly in Arian disputes, and partly in the controversy known in Church-history as that of "The Three Chap-

¹ The life of Columbanus has been written by Jonas, a monk in the monastery of Bobbio. He lived in the seventh century, and has always been considered a writer of credit. His *Vita S. Columbani* has been often published. (Vide Fleming, *Collectanea Sacra*; Messingham, *Florilegium*; Mabillon, AA.SS. Ord. Ben.) The epistles and other works of Columbanus are to be found in Fleming's *Coll. Sacra*, and in the Lyons edition of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, tom. xii.

ters." Columbanus complied with the request of the Lombard king; and the object of his epistle to Boniface was, to urge him on to call a synod, which might calm the troubled waters of the Church, and exonerate the Roman see from a charge brought against it of abetting heretics. In the course of his epistle he takes occasion to state very clearly his view of the supremacy of the papal chair, which it may be well to give here in his own words:—

"From that time (*i. e.* of St. Peter's and St. Paul's visit to Rome) ye are great and illustrious, and Rome herself more noble and renowned; and if one may so speak, on account of the two apostles of Christ (for *they* are the heavens spoken of by the Holy Ghost, as telling the glory of God, of whom it is inferred that their sound has gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world), you are almost celestial, and Rome the head of the Churches of the world, saving the singular prerogative of the place of the Lord's resurrection.¹ And as your honour is great, in proportion to the dignity of the apostolic chair, great also is the care necessarily imposed on you, not to lose your dignity by any perverse obstinacy. For so long only shall power remain with you as right reason shall remain; for he

¹ Dr. Lanigan (vol. ii. p. 290) quotes a part of the passage here given, omitting the clause, "saving the singular prerogative of the Church of Jerusalem." This is almost the only instance of a garbled quotation I have met with in that writer's learned history.

is the unerring porter of the kingdom of heaven, who, by true knowledge, opens to the worthy, and shuts against the unworthy. If he act otherwise, he shall be able neither to open nor to shut. Since then, these things be true, and are received as such, without any gainsaying, by all wise persons (though it is known to all, and no one is ignorant in what sense our Saviour gave the keys to St. Peter), and you, perchance, by this I know not what arrogance, claim to yourselves above the rest, greater authority and power in divine matters, you should know that your power shall be less with the Lord, if you even admit the thought of such a thing ; for unity of faith in the whole world has made unity of power and prerogative ; so that liberty should be given by all and every where to the truth, and admission be equally denied by all to error. Because a right confession of the faith gave this privilege to the holy keeper of the keys, the common father of all, it is also lawful for your juniors to stir you up for the zeal of the faith, for the love of peace, for the unity of our common mother the Church, which, doubtless, like Rebecca, feels her maternal bowels rent and torn, grieves for the intestine strife of her own children, and deeply bewails these divisions within her own bowels."

But in addition to the testimony it bears upon so important a subject, this letter is valuable on other grounds. It speaks in the strongest terms of the entire orthodoxy of the ancient Irish Church ; there-

by disproving, by the testimony of one well qualified, by early education and sound learning, to form an opinion, charges that of late have insinuated its unsoundness in the faith.¹ “ All of us natives of Ireland,” writes Columbanus, “ whose dwelling is upon the confines of the earth, receiving no doctrine beyond what the evangelists and apostles taught, are the followers of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the disciples who, by Divine inspiration, wrote the sacred canon of Scripture. Amongst us there has been no heretic, no Jew, no schismatic ; but we adhere with unshaken firmness to the Catholic faith, as we received it at the first from you, to wit, the successors of these blessed apostles.” And towards the close of the letter, Columbanus records his own belief in our blessed Lord’s divine nature, which is equally removed from the error of the Eutychians (who confused our Lord’s divine and human nature into one),

¹ Mr. Moore, in his recent *History of Ireland*, most strangely says :—“ It would appear that, after the death of that great Pope (St. Gregory), the Lombard court had again fallen into schism; for it was confessedly at the strong instance of Agilulph himself that Columbanus addressed his expostulatory letter to Pope Boniface ; and the views which he takes in that remarkable document are, for the most part, those of the schismatics, or the defenders of the three chapters.” (Vol. i. p. 264.) Mr. Moore here insinuates that Columbanus was either a Nestorian or semi-Nestorian ; whereas had he read the epistle he professed to give an account of, he would have seen that the creed of the writer was perfectly orthodox.

and that of the Nestorians (who held two separate persons in Christ). The words of his creed are as follows :—“ If, as I have heard, some do not believe two natures in Christ, they are to be accounted heretics rather than Christians : for Christ, our Saviour, is very God, eternal, without time ; and very man, sinless, of time ; who, according to His divine nature, is co-eternal with the Father, and, according to His humanity, is younger than his mother ; who, born in the flesh, was not, however, absent from heaven ; abiding in the Trinity, lived in the world. And therefore if it be written in the fifth synod, as some one told me,¹ that he who adores two natures has his prayers divided, the assertor of this heresy is divided from the saints, and separated from God. For we, in respect to the unity of person in which it hath pleased the fulness of the Godhead to dwell bodily, believe one Christ, God and man, because He who descended is the same who ascended above all heavens to fulfil all things.”

The monastic rule of St. Columbanus is described by Archishop Ussher as one of the two most cele-

¹ The canon of the fifth synod does not anathematise those who worship two natures in Christ, but those who introduce into their worship two *separate* adorations—one to God the Word, and one to the man Christ, as if the human and divine natures were not united in one person. (Canon ix. Conc. Const.) So that the informant of Columbanus gave him an inaccurate report of the decree of the synod. The canon was especially directed against the Nestorians.

brated rules of ascetic life in the middle ages.¹ It is particularly worthy of our notice, as in all probability it was the same as the rule observed in the Irish monastery of Bangor at an earlier period. Columbanus was remarkable for his attachment to the Irish customs. Their defective paschal calculations he both followed and defended. The Irish liturgy he likewise introduced at Luxeuil. All which increases the probability that his monastic rule was also derived from Ireland. “It is short, and principally engaged in recommending the monastic virtues of obedience, poverty, disinterestedness, humility, chastity, mortification, silence, and discretion.” According to its regulation, no food was to be taken before noon. Then it was to be of the simplest kind; such as herbs, vegetables, meal and water, with a little bread. It was also to be apportioned to the labour undergone; and each day the monks were to fast, pray, work, and read. The prescribed course of psalmody was so severe, that at certain seasons the entire Psalter was appointed to be sung through in two successive nights. A very strict penitential code is added to the monastic rule, by which every neglect of duty is directed to be punished with much severity. It condemns the offenders sometimes to corporal chastisement, sometimes to silence, and, again, to the recital of a given number of psalms. Upon entering the monastery, or leaving it, the

¹ The other was the Benedictine. (Ussher's *Brit. Eccl. Antiq.* cap xvii.)

monks were required to ask the abbot's benediction. If they went beyond the bounds of the monastery without the permission of their superior; if they neglected to pray before and after their daily task; if, during the hours of prayer, they were inattentive and negligent; if they omitted to repeat the "Amen;" or if they spoke to a secular person without being ordered to do so—for these and such delinquencies they were liable to be strictly punished.¹

The rule of Columbanus soon became united to that of St. Benedict; and they both continue to be observed, with various and explanatory modifications, in the greater part of the western Church to the present day. But it is remarkable that the Benedictine order, that spread so quickly over the face of Europe, did not penetrate into Ireland until introduced by the English. Up to the twelfth century, the Irish had their peculiar religious orders, of greater antiquity than that of St. Benedict. Thus there was the order of Columbian monks, comprising all who

¹ In Mabillon's account of this Penitential he has the following sentence:—"It is moreover prescribed, that whoever is about to receive the Sacrifice (to wit, the Holy Communion) should thrice humble himself; and that novices, as being unlearned and inexperienced, should not approach to the cup; which is an argument that communion under one kind was in use at that time."—*Annales Bened.* lib. viii. p. 213. I have not been able to discover any rule of the kind in the copy of the Penitential published in Fleming's *Collectanea Sacra*. There is nothing whatever said in that copy about receiving the Holy Communion.

were connected with any monastic house of which Colum-cille was the reputed founder. Again, there was the order of those who observed the rule of St. Kiaran of Clonmacnoise, or St. Carthag of Lismore, or St. Coemgen of Glendaloch, and Comgall of Bangor.

But a new order originated in the eighth century, called Celi-de, or Culdee—an Irish name, signifying *the Spouse of God*. Its history is at present very obscure. The order would appear to have originated at the monastery of Tallaght, near Dublin. Its first abbot was Moelruan, who died in the year 787. Like many of his brethren, he was a bishop as well as abbot; and was one of the compilers of the calendar known as “The Martyrology of Tallaght.” There are two rules of this order still preserved in manuscript; one of which is a prose version of a metrical rule, written by Moelruan himself. The Culdees are called in it “Moelruan’s people;” and there are many other passages scattered through ancient Irish manuscripts, in which the name of this abbot-bishop occurs in connexion with the Culdees.¹ From these rules it would appear that the order consisted of two divisions—the clerks and lay brothers. Their course of psalmody was even more severe than that followed at Luxeuil. Two of the

¹ I am indebted for most of my information respecting the Culdees, as well as for translations of the two rules preserved amongst the Irish MSS., to the kindness of my friend Mr. Curry.

monks always remained in the oratory until the time of matins, while the remainder were taking their rest ; and by these the whole hundred and fifty Psalms were repeated. They were succeeded in the oratory by two others, who performed the same service *from the hour of matins until morning*. They then retired to rest until the third hour, when all the order joined together in celebrating the office proper to that part of the day.

It was also a part of their rule, for one of the order to be reading the gospels, the rules, and miracles of the saints aloud, while the rest were at dinner ; and each day they were questioned about what had been read to them. A portion of their time would seem to have been devoted to the instruction of young persons attached to the order ; for one of their laws inflicts a penalty upon any who, in the heat of anger, curses or abuses his pupil. The Culdees observed a fast once a month, “upon half a meal of bread, and half a meal of watery whey.” They were likewise in the habit of practising confession, as appears from one of their rules, which says, that “to abstain from confession is proper for him who observes not the penance imposed by the friend of his soul (*i.e.* his spiritual adviser) ; or if he should not have any confessor, or director, whom he deemed competent, at hand ; that is, a director learned in the rules and ways of the Scripture, and the rules of the saints, to whom he should confess, and to whose enjoined penance he should submit.” In this very

obscure rule (which is literally rendered from the Irish), we have, it is believed, the earliest mention of the practice of private confession in the Irish Church. The rule notices two cases in which it was lawful for a Culdee to abstain from confession : one was, the want of a priest, or director, sufficiently versed in holy Scripture and ancient writings to give him sound council and advice ; the other, "if he observe not the penance imposed by his spiritual adviser ;" which probably means, if he be incapacitated by sickness, or some other cause, from observing the imposed penance ; as if in their religious system there was some invariable connexion between confession and penance.

After the institution of secular canons had found its way into Ireland, the Culdees in many cases appear to have joined it, observing its regulations in addition to their own particular rule. They were chiefly attached to the cathedral establishments, and continued in the Church to a very late period. In the time of Archbishop Ussher there were Culdees connected with many of the larger churches in the north of Ireland—especially Armagh and Clogher—who performed the daily service at the cathedrals, and were governed by a prior of their own order. It has been said that the Culdees of Armagh were a corporate body, and possessed of a considerable landed property.

One of the earliest writers connected with this order was Aengus Celi-de, a pious abbot-bishop who

flourished towards the close of the eighth century. He was educated in the monastery of Clonenagh, in the Queen's County, where he entered upon the cœlitic life. For some time he lived as a hermit at a desert place, called, from his name, Disert-Aenguis; but afterwards he attached himself to the monastery of Tallaght, then governed by the Abbot Moelruan. Aengus was an enthusiastic admirer of the ancient martyrs and saints of the Christian Church, and especially those who had flourished in Ireland. To commemorate their praises he composed a valuable poem in the Irish language, known as the *Felire Aenguis*, or Festology of Aengus.¹ It is a kind of martyrology, or sacred calendar, curiously arranged in such a manner that to each day of the month are affixed two lines in verse, into which are introduced the names of all the saints honoured on that day. The manuscript of this work, at present existing, is interlined with glosses and marginal notes, which are evidently added at a later period, and by more than one hand. Aengus expended much time and labour in the composition of this martyrology; for he informs us that he consulted all the martyrologies within his reach, far and near, such as the works of Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, and the martyrology of Eusebius. From these writers he collected the names of the

¹ The *Felire Aenguis* is very minutely described in the descriptive catalogue of the MSS. in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy. The catalogue has been recently drawn up by Mr. Curry.

holy men of foreign countries; but from the “host of Ireland’s books” he extracted all the information he needed with respect to the saints of his native Church.

Aengus wrote another work upon a similar subject, in which the names of the Irish saints were arranged in a very fanciful order. The fifth book of this work is a collection of “Litanies;” and companies of saints are invoked in them, in a long series of daily prayers. They are classified in a manner not uncommon among the Irish; as (for example) those who were educated under the same master; or who united under the same leader to preach to the heathen; or those who were buried in the same monastery. After thus enumerating various companies of domestic and foreign saints, the litany proceeds to invoke bishops of Churches celebrated in Ireland, in companies of seven; as the seven holy bishops of Ardpatrick, the seven holy bishops of Kill-decedan, &c.

It appears from this work, that the practice of invocating the saints obtained in Ireland towards the close of the eighth century. Whether the custom was of longer standing in the Irish Church, or whether it gained admission even at this period into any of the public liturgies, it would not, perhaps, be easy to determine. There is an ancient liturgy still in existence, which invokes several of the older Irish saints; but there are no certain means of ascertaining the period when these invocations were introduced

into it. In other communions they found their way into the public litany about the seventh or eighth century ; and it is probable that the custom was soon adopted by the Irish, whose reverence for their holy men amounted to a superstition. However, no evidence exists of its prevalence in earlier ages, which appear to have been free from a practice that has proved so hurtful to the well-being of the Church.

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. KILIAN, BISHOP OF FRANCONIA — VIRGILIUS OF SALTZBURG — CLEMENS AND ALBINUS — JOHN SCOTUS ERIGENA — IRISH MISSIONARIES TO ICELAND.

COLUMBANUS is an example of an Irish monk carried into distant countries through that extreme love of asceticism which formed so prominent a feature in the religion of those times. He is a type of a large class of monks in the Irish Church, who, it must be acknowledged, pushed their attachment to the monastic life somewhat too far. Those who search into the history of Ireland will not fail to perceive, that a larger proportion of monks and hermits flourished in that country than was, perhaps, altogether compatible with a healthy state of religion. Yet if they all were the equals of Columbanus in piety and in learning, it is difficult to complain of their numbers being too great.

St. Kilian may be adduced as an instance of the other class of Irish monks, who were prevailed on to leave their own country by a spirit chiefly missionary. These, indeed, formed a numerous body of holy and disinterested men, who thought no sacrifice too great to be made in behalf of the kingdom of Christ. It

was not the expectation of any temporal advantage that induced such persons to encounter the trials and dangers of a missionary life: but it was the simple desire of doing good, of advancing the interests of the Church, of reclaiming the outcasts, and bringing back the lost. And there is nothing more honourable to the ancient Church in Ireland than this fact—admitted by every historian—that, although so remote and isolated in its position, it nevertheless almost equalled Rome herself in the number of its missionaries. Scarcely is there a country in the south and west of Europe where Irish monks did not preach the Gospel, or erect monasteries.

St. Kilian was born of noble parents, some time in the seventh century, and from childhood was devoted to the service of religion. At the proper age he was admitted into one of the Irish monasteries, where he cheerfully submitted to the rigorous discipline of the place, “taking up his cross,” writes his biographer, “and following Christ.” His deportment here soon won the affection of the other monks; and they gave him a proof of it by electing him their abbot, having first prevailed on him to take holy orders.

This situation Kilian did not hold for any length of time. Anxious to visit other lands, he crossed over into Britain, and thence proceeded to Germany, passing through Gaul. He took up his abode at Wurtzburg, with the monks that accompanied him from Ireland, of whom one was a priest named Co-

loman, and another Totman, a deacon. It was their wish to preach the Gospel to the people with whom they were sojourning ; but before they did so, Kilian visited Rome to obtain the sanction and support of Conon, the pope. According to some accounts, it was this prelate from whom St. Kilian received episcopal consecration, although other writers maintain that he was a bishop before leaving Ireland.¹ Returning to Germany, St. Kilian commenced his labours, and these were attended with much success. He converted Gozbert, the duke of Franconia, to the Christian faith, and many others in the province shortly followed their ruler's example. But an unhappy circumstance soon occurred, that brought his mission to an untimely end. It happened that the converted prince had married his brother's wife before he became a Christian. St. Kilian was aware of this, but had been unwilling to remonstrate upon the unlawfulness of such a marriage until Gozbert should be somewhat confirmed in his attachment to Christianity. He feared at first lest the stern morality of the Gospel might terrify the weak convert, and cause him to fall back into his former course of idolatry. A seasonable opportunity, however, arrived at length, and Kilian addressed the duke in these words :— “ My son, whom I have begotten in the Gospel, I rejoice greatly at the progress you are making in the faith. Yet it grieves me much that you are entangled

¹ Lanigan, vol. iii. p. 120.

in unlawful nuptials; and I fear greatly lest such a marriage keep you back from the right way. For the wise man says, ‘Whoso offends in one point loses many goods;’ and the Apostle James witnesses, that ‘whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.’ Besides, man is created anew in baptism, not in part, but altogether. That he may therefore become entirely a new creature, he ought to retain none of his former errors.” Gozbert was naturally much distressed at hearing this expostulation; but religious principle overcoming every other feeling, he promised that a separation should take place so soon as he returned from an expedition on which he was about to set out. During his absence, however, the nature of Kilian’s remonstrance reached the ears of Geilana (for this was the name of the duke’s wife), and it filled her with indignation and resentment. She determined to have her revenge, and hired some ruffians, who entered the chapel while Kilian and his companions were engaged in nocturnal prayer, and put them all to death. Great efforts were made to conceal the murder of the missionaries; and upon the duke’s return home, he was assured that they had privately taken their departure from his dominions; but the truth was discovered before long, and it is said that the unhappy queen died afterwards in great misery. The memory of St. Kilian was venerated for many ages in the province of Franconia; and the church, of which he was a principal founder,

is the best monument that could be raised to his piety and to his zeal.¹

Virgilius, bishop of Salzburg, in the year 767, was another missionary from Ireland. He was an active and laborious prelate, and a learned man. The cathedral of Salzburg was erected by him, and dedicated to God, in memory of St. Rupert. He was thirteen years engaged in building it. He founded also many monasteries, repaired those that had fallen into decay, and laboured much to consolidate the interests of religion in his diocese. Nor was his attention confined to these matters, important as they undoubtedly were. He did all in his power to increase the progress of Christianity in the neighbouring province of Carinthia, by sending its inhabitants a bishop and clergy, and watching over their spiritual interests with anxious solicitude. In consequence of his exertions in their behalf, Virgilius has been called “the Apostle of Carinthia.” He died in the year 784 or 785.²

Virgilius had some unpleasant disputes with the illustrious St. Boniface, the archbishop of the German provinces included under the ancient name of Thuringia. In his conduct toward this great and good man he was, perhaps, deficient in the reverence

¹ Vide Vita S. Kiliani, apud Messingham, p. 319, &c.

² An imperfect Life of St. Virgilius is published in Messingham’s Florilegium. The history of his disputes with St. Boniface may be gathered from the epistles of that prelate and Pope Zachary, printed in Ussher’s Sylloge, ep. xvi. xvii.

and submission that was due to him; and this was no uncommon failing in those Irish clergy who were about the same period scattered over Germany. Virgilius is also said to have broached a doctrine, as it was then called, which was not far from bringing him into serious difficulties. The opinion that "there was another world and other men under the earth," appeared like heresy in the eighth century, although now in a sound sense every where received. Virgilius maintained this truth, and in all probability had learned it in the schools of Ireland. But Zachary, the pope, when informed that he inculcated so strange an opinion, addressed a letter to St. Boniface, directing him to call a synod which should deprive Virgilius of his office, and expel him from the Church. Fortunately, however, the synod was not assembled.

A few years before the death of Virgilius two remarkable natives of Ireland visited Gaul, of whom the following story is related:—It happened that some British merchants arrived on the French coasts, accompanied by two persons, whose names were Clemens and Albinus.¹ They were "incomparably

¹ It is not certain that Albinus was the name of Clemens' companion. Colgan and other writers have conjectured that it was John (not Erigena). Albinus was probably an assumed name, as in the case of Alcuin of England, who took the surname of Albinus. The whole story has been questioned by one or two authors, but, I believe, without sufficient authority. Dr. Lanigan, in a long note (vol. iii. p. 210-212), quotes,

skilled in secular and sacred Scriptures." Day after day they appeared amongst the merchants; but instead of exposing any wares for sale, they used to stand and cry, "If any desire wisdom, let him come to us and receive it, for we have it for sale." The people were much astonished at their course of proceeding, and some thought them not right in their senses. At last their fame reached the ears of Charlemagne, who was always the patron of learned men. Charlemagne sent for them, asked them many questions, and was so pleased with the intelligence and sincerity of their replies, that he for a time entertained them at his court, and persuaded Clemens to remain in Gaul, and to open a school for the young of every rank.¹ He sent Albinus into Italy, and amongst others, the authority of Muratori in support of its authenticity. I have no opportunity of consulting the work of this learned author, whose opinion, together with the judgment of Colgan, Ussher, and others, must weigh strongly in favour of its substantial truth. See Ussher's *Sylloge*, præf.

¹ "The establishment of public schools in France is owing to Charlemagne. At his accession we are assured that no means of education existed in his dominions; and in order to restore in some degree the spirit of letters, he was compelled to invite strangers from countries where learning was not so thoroughly extinguished. Alcuin of England, *Clement of Ireland*, Theodulf of Germany, were the true Paladins who repaired to his court. With the help of these he revived a few sparks of diligence, and established schools in different cities of his empire; nor was he ashamed to be the disciple of that in his own palace, under the care of Alcuin." — Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 520.

committed to him the monastery of St. Augustin at Pavia, "so that all who wished might resort to him there for instruetion."

These instances may enable the student of history to form some conception of the active missionary spirit that prevailed in the Irish Church during the seventh and eighth century. Unfavourably circumstanced as it was in many respects, especially in its ecclesiastical and political position, it was still enabled to get the better of its difficulties, and to train up within its schools active missionaries and holy saints. Its course of prosperity was soon interrupted by unhappy events; but up to this time the Church in Ireland had done much to advance the welfare of religion; and the monks that were sent to other countries were not only remarkable for their sincerity and zeal, but also for their shrewdness and ability. They were in general, as in the case of Columbanus and Virgilius, men of learning and erudition. This they had acquired in the Irish monastic foundations, where the holy Scriptures, the writings of the fathers, and even secular literature, still continued to be studied and to be taught.

A remarkable proof that attention was paid to the acquisition of secular learning may be found in the history of John Scotus Erigena, a native of Ireland, who flourished in the ninth century. The accounts of his life are obscure; but it is generally admitted that he received an education in Ireland before he went to France, where he was induced to

settle at the invitation of King Charles the Bald. John Scotus surpassed most of his contemporaries in acquaintance with the Greek language, and ranked as one of the principal philosophers of his age. At the request of King Charles he translated the works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, from the original Greek, and thus exercised an important influence over the subsequent history of philosophy. His own philosophical opinions were many of them fanciful in the extreme, and some most unsound. He was, however, a man of extensive information, and is noticed here chiefly on account of his proficiency in the Greek tongue, which it is very probable that he had learned in Ireland; for there seems good ground to believe that some Greek ecclesiastics settled amongst the Irish in the sixth or seventh century. They would appear to have fixed their abode at Trim, in the county of Meath, the church of which was known popularly as "the Greek Church," even so late as the time of Archbishop Ussher, and perhaps at a still more recent period. It is also remarkable, that one of those who accompanied Virgilius to Saltzburg was a bishop named Dobdan, who is expressly called a *Greek*.¹

John Scotus² was engaged in many of the con-

¹ Vide Ussher's *Sylloge*, ep. xvi. note. The Rev. Richard Butler, the present learned vicar of Trim, has printed a small tract on the antiquities of his church, entitled "Some Notices of the Church of St. Patrick, Trim :" Trim, 1837.

² Mr. Hallam has a high opinion of the genius of John

troversies that agitated the Gallican Church in the ninth century. In particular, he interested himself in the disputes respecting the recently promulgated opinion of Paschase Radbert about the mode of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist. Scotus wrote upon this subject, and is said to have opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. The work is lost; but his views on other points are so fanciful, that, were it in existence, it would probably be found to contain some theory of his own, rather than the true judgment of the Catholic Church.

Dr. Lanigan asserts, that prior to the times of John Scotus, and probably much earlier, "the Irish had extended their missions even to Iceland, which they called Thule, or Tyle, and which it seems they had a knowledge of as far back as the fifth century. Whether it was inhabited at that early period it is difficult to determine; but it is certain that it contained inhabitants long before the time assigned by some writers for its first population. At whatso-ever time Irish missionaries first visited that island, there can be no doubt of some of them having

Scotus:—"I am not aware," he writes, "that there appeared more than two really considerable men in the republic of letters from the sixth to the middle of the eleventh century—John, surnamed Scotus, or Erigena, a native of Ireland; and Gerbert, who became pope by the name of Sylvester II.: the first endowed with a bold and acute metaphysical genius; the second excellent, for the time in which he lived, in mathematical science and mechanical inventions."—*Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 335.

been there in the eighth century; and it may be justly laid down, that this mission was kept up until the arrival of the Norwegians, who expelled the Irish clergy."¹

¹ Lanigan, vol. iii. p. 220. See Appendix.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INVASION OF THE DANES — THEIR CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY — BATTLE OF CLONTARF — DEATH OF BRIAN BORU — CORMAC, BISHOP OF CASHEL.

IN the mean while the political horizon of the island began to be overcast with dark clouds. In addition to the harassing feuds of the provincial nobles, its coasts were inundated by swarms of Scandinavian pirates; whose irruptions, of necessity, tended to deteriorate the civil and religious condition of the people. The account of their invasion belongs more properly to the secular than the religious history of Ireland; and I shall not, therefore, enter into any further detail than is requisite to give a fair picture of the injuries inflicted on the Church.

The Danes first landed in Ireland in the year 795. Their ravages upon this occasion were confined to the small island of Rathlin; but returning in the year 798, they laid waste the greater part of the province of Ulster. For several successive years they carried on their depredations with scarcely any intermission. Most of the celebrated churches and monasteries fell beneath the violence of their swords. Armagh was plundered more than

once, and its bishop and clergy either put to death, or compelled to fly. The monastery of Bangor suffered repeatedly from their attacks. On one occasion, 900 of the monks connected with it were slain.¹ In like manner, the abbeys of Glendaloch, Kells, Clonmacnoise, and others too numerous to be specified, were burned or pillaged, their libraries destroyed, and their monks put to death. Even the secluded Isle of Iona did not escape the rapacious violence of the Danes.

Towards the close of the tenth century, the tide of fortune began to turn against the invaders. The Danish occupiers of Dublin were peculiarly unsuccessful; and it was owing probably to their continued disasters that they were induced to make a public profession of Christianity, about the year 948. The other settlers soon followed their example; and before the end of this same century, almost all the Danes in Ireland had embraced the Christian faith. They had three maritime cities in their possession—Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick. Over these, bishops were in time appointed; but in consequence of the jealousies entertained of the Irish, the Danes used to send them into England for consecration. Indeed, they separated themselves altogether from the rest of the Irish Church; and instead of submitting to the primatial authority of the see of Armagh, prevailed on the Archbishops of Canterbury to receive them into their protection.

¹ S. Bernard. Vita S. Malach. cap. v.

This continued for a long time to be a source of considerable annoyance to the Irish primates, who could ill brook a dependence upon the metropolitan of another kingdom, which they conceived to be somewhat derogatory to the dignity of their own see.¹

The unbecoming spirit which pervaded the Danes of Ireland may be traced in the following letter, sent by the burgesses of the city of Dublin to the English primate, requesting him to consecrate Gregory as their bishop, and to continue the spiritual relationship that had for some time existed between Dublin and Canterbury. The epistle was written in the year 1122:—

“To the most reverend and most religious Lord Ralph, archbishop of Canterbury, all the burgesses of the city of Dublin, and the whole assembly of the clergy, wish eternal health: Whereas very many, holy father, reverence thee on account of thy deep piety, and all the faithful, for thy great faith and sound doctrines, love and honour thee, we judge it fitting to send unto you Gregory, by the grace of God, our bishop elect. For we have always willingly placed our bishops under the government of thy predecessors, from whom we are mindful that our prelates received their ecclesiastical dignity. Know you truly, that the bishops of Ireland have great indignation against us, and that bishop espe-

¹ See particularly Ussher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, cap. viii.

cially who dwells at Armagh, because we are unwilling to obey their ordination, but always wish to be under your dominion. Therefore, as suppliants, we seek your help to advance Gregory to the sacred order of the episcopate; if you are willing to retain any longer that spiritual relationship which for so long a time we have preserved unto you."

The conversion of the Danes did not put an end to their predatory excursions, nor much improve their moral condition. They continued to pillage and plunder as usual, until their power was at length effectually crushed on the field of Clontarf; where a battle, fought on Good Friday, in the year 1014, terminated in their decisive overthrow. The Irish were commanded in this engagement by Brian Boru, monarch of Ireland—a prince possessed of higher endowments and greater virtues than were usually met with in the other chieftains of his age. Brian, unfortunately, fell on the field of battle.¹ His dying words are said to have been,—

¹ "Long his loss shall Erin weep—
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep—
Strains of immortality."

GRAY'S *Ode of the Fatal Sisters.*

In the note appended to this ode, there is evident reference to the battle of Clontarf; but the poet was not familiar with Irish history. Gray speaks of the battle as if it had been fought upon Christmas-day, instead of Good Friday; and between Sigurt, earl of Orkney, and Brian, king of Dublin, instead of *Sitric*, king of Dublin, and Brian Boru, monarch of Ireland.

“The strongest hand uppermost;” or, as it may more piously be rendered, *“the strongest hand is from above;”* victory is the gift of God. The body of King Brian was carried by his soldiers to Armagh, and was buried in a stone coffin at the north side of the altar, with such pomp and ceremony as these rude times could invent. After the battle of Clontarf, the Danes began gradually to amalgamate with the Irish, and to allow their mutual jealousies to sink into oblivion. They soon became one people; and the lapse of another century scarcely left a trace of difference between the two races.

But it was not so easy to obliterate the marks of the injury that had been inflicted on the Church by their hostile contentions. Far readier is it to hurt religion than to heal her wounds. The whole system of the Church was broken in upon; the monasteries lay waste; the sacred edifices were in ruins; the discipline of the clergy and monks was relaxed, so that many of them fell into disorderly practices. Until this period the crime of simony was unknown in Ireland, which now began to obtain in it; and it spread amongst the Irish clergy

I am not aware that there was any king of Dublin named Brian in the eleventh century. The principal authorities concerning the battle of Clontarf are the Annals of Ulster, and, perhaps, Keating's History of Ireland; but I have had within my reach only Ware's Antiquities, O'Conor's Dissertations, and similar works.

more than perhaps it otherwise would have done, from the circumstance that there were so many bishops in the country who had no fixed sees.¹ These, when forced by the Danes to seek shelter in foreign lands, were guilty of so many irregularities in ordaining persons without the permission of their lawful bishops, that a Gallican synod was compelled to pass a canon, declaring their ordinations simoniacal.² In like manner, an English council, held in the year 816, decreed that Irish priests should not be permitted to administer the sacraments, because it was not known from whom they had received their ordination.

Formerly it had been one of the grievances of the Irish clergy that they were compelled, by their tyrannical chieftains, to attend them on the field of battle. But in the year 799, the clergy remonstrated with Hugh, king of Ireland, against the continuance of such a service; and with some difficulty obtained an exemption from it. Notwithstanding this, however, the troubles of the times appear to have inflamed the minds of some of the clerical order with a military enthusiasm altogether

¹ “The practice of raising persons to the episcopacy, without being attached to fixed sees, had been carried so far in Ireland, that it is not to be wondered at that some of them might have made a trade of their rank.”—*Lanigan*, iii. p. 275. See before, Chapter IV.

² *Lanigan*, iii. p. 274, from *Fleury*, Hist. Eccl. lib. xlvi. sec. 5.

unsuitable to their peculiar calling.¹ Cormac MacCullenan, first bishop of Cashel, is the most remarkable instance of this misplaced ardour. He was far from being a careless or a bad man; and was devoted to a kind of genealogical learning very popular among the Irish. He was king as well as bishop of Cashel, which latter office he undertook in the year 901. Yet the life of Cormac was almost entirely passed on the battle-field. He had constant feuds with the neighbouring chieftains, and he died fighting against Flann, the monarch of Ireland. Three abbots were in his army, and one of them was a principal commander in the battle.

Cormac MacCullenan was the compiler of an ancient miscellany, called *The Psalter of Cashel*.² It consisted of various genealogical tales, poems, and tracts on historical and other subjects, which

¹ One must not judge these warlike priests too severely. In much more enlightened times, William III. was on the point of bestowing a bishopric on an Irish clergyman, whose only pretensions to so high an office were, that he had successfully defended the city of Derry against the army of King James II. He was afterwards killed in battle. There is a monument erected to the memory of this clergyman in Derry, and he is looked upon by a certain party as a pattern of loyalty and religion.

² The name "Psalter" was probably given to books of this kind, because learned men began to make collections of such valuable tracts or poems as they were able to transcribe, by stitching them to their Psalters, in order to preserve them. From this the whole collection came to be called "Psalters," after the one properly so called had ceased to exist.

he was enabled from time to time to collect or to transcribe. One may judge of the antiquity of these treatises from the fact, that Cormac composed a glossary to explain such Irish words occurring in them as were becoming obsolete in his day. The glossary is still in existence,¹ but the fate of “the Psalter” is not known.

It is also popularly supposed that Cormac's chapel, on the rock of Cashel, was erected by this prelate; but it seems to be a more probable opinion that the chapel was built in the year 1127; and that it owed its foundation to the piety of Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster, from whom, and not from the other Cormac, its name is derived.

¹ It is at present in the press for the members of the Irish Archæological Society.

CHAPTER X.

USURPATION OF THE SEE OF ARMAGH, AND OF ABBEY-LANDS
— COMORBANS — ERENACHS — EPISTLE OF LANFRANC OF
CANTERBURY.

A CURIOUS abuse originated during the confusion of these times, which, more than any other cause, contributed to weaken ecclesiastical discipline and to accelerate the decline of religion in Ireland. A powerful Irish family seized upon the see of Armagh, and contrived for a long series of years to fill the chair of St. Patrick with members of their own family. The usurpation commenced about the year 926. The first possessors of the see were in holy orders; but after a time this restriction was broken through, and eight married laymen in succession enjoyed the revenues of Armagh, assuming the title and privileges of the archbishop. They retained, however, coadjutor bishops, lawfully consecrated, who performed all their spiritual duties, and were, in fact, the rightful prelates of the Church. Historians are not agreed about the name of the clan who thus intruded into the most exalted dignity in the Irish Church. Some suppose it to have been a branch of the O'Neills, and others of the Maguires of Fermanagh; but the most pro-

bable conjecture makes it the posterity of Daire, the chieftain who is said to have given to St. Patrick the ground on which the church and city of Armagh were erected. Whatever was the name of the family, it became extinct in the twelfth century; and this was justly regarded as a judgment from Heaven for the sacrilege and impiety of its members.¹

A similar evil affected some of the ancient monastic institutions. The Danes having put to flight great numbers of the Irish monks, it was not easy afterwards to reassemble them, or to rebuild at once all the conventional houses that had been plundered. In the mean while, the lands of some of the ruined monasteries were invaded by another sort of plunderers—the powerful neighbouring chieftains, who seized upon them for their own private benefit. To preserve the remainder from a similar fate, and to keep them for the use of the Church in a season of greater prosperity, the clergy thought it would be a good plan to consign them to the custody of laymen, elected by themselves as guardians of the ecclesiastical possessions. These persons sometimes assumed the title of abbots, “preserving the name, although not the reality.” But in process of time they proved not less rapacious than those they were appointed to guard against. They appropriated to

¹ S. Bernard. Vita S. Malach. cap. vii. See also Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 302, 303.

themselves the property entrusted to their care, and allowed the clergy only the tithes and dues ; thus often putting it out of the Church's power to restore a ruined monastery.¹

These stewards of the ecclesiastical lands were generally called by the names of Comorban and Erenach. The title "Comorban" was properly applied to the successor of some distinguished abbot. Thus the Abbot of Iona or of Derry was styled the "Comorban or successor of Colum-cille." It is doubtful whether the Irish ever gave this title to the successors of bishops *as such*. It is true, indeed, that the successors of St. Patrick, and of other distinguished prelates, were generally called the *Comorbans*; but then (as Colgan observes) these prelates were abbots as well as bishops. However, the name was often applied to persons holding even inferior ecclesiastical dignities; and when laymen came into possession of a portion of the Church-property, being entrusted with the guardianship of it by the clergy, it would appear that they also were allowed to assume the title. Some are of opinion that the appellation was restricted to those laymen who were connected with the original benefactors to the particular churches or monasteries, to whom the lands naturally reverted when the conventional houses were deserted. It is said

¹ S. Bernard. Vita S. Malachiae, cap. v. (Messingham's edition). Giraldus Camb. Itiner. Camb. L. c. 4, quoted by Lanigan, iv. p. 79.

also that these Comorbans acknowledged themselves to be under the authority of the bishop of the diocese, by the payment of a slight annual contribution. But however this be, it eventually became customary for most of the usurpers of ecclesiastical livings and property to be designated Comorbans or Corbes.¹

According to the original constitution of the Erenachs, they would appear to have been the managers of the property of the Church. The word is said to signify an archdeacon. The Erenachs were always laymen. Their office was to distribute alms to the poor, to exercise hospitality, and to keep the churches in order. But whatever may have been their primitive duty, they soon became, like the lay Comorbans, usurpers of the Church-lands. In many places they managed to get into their possession all the estates of the bishops, paying them only certain dues or head-rents. These usurpations they transmitted to their posterity, or at least to the sept to which they belonged, according to the Irish laws of succession and inheritance. On the death of an Erenach, the sept used to elect another from among themselves ; and in case they did not agree,

¹ Colgan derives the Irish word “Comhorba,” or “Comorban,” from “comh,” *together with*, and “forba,” *land*; and says it is equivalent to the Latin word *conterraneus*, sharing the same land. The word came to be applied to abbots and prelates, because they succeeded not only to the ecclesiastical dignity, but also to the lands and farms.—*Trias Thaum.* pp. 630, 631.

the bishop and clergy were authorised to interfere and select an Erenach out of the sept; for they could not take their property into their own hands.¹ If the whole sept became extinct, it was necessary to look out for another, to which it should be transferred, and which would be vested with the right of electing the Erenach, under the same conditions and charges as those observed by his predecessors. Similar regulations existed with regard to the lay Comorbans, who differed from the Erenachs chiefly in possessing more land, and sometimes having Erenachs under them.²

Such was the exaction and plunder to which the Church was obliged to submit; yet it had been well if the disorders terminated here. Unfortunately, however, the strength of religion was so greatly weakened by relaxed discipline, that it was unable to oppose sufficiently the progress of decay. The history of the eleventh century presents nothing to interest, and little to console, the student. Intestine war harassed the state, while oppression weighed down the Church; and, to complete the sad picture, many practices gained

¹ To this day the peasantry, who are the hereditary descendants of Erenachs, have in their possession ancient croziers, boxes, reliquaries, chalices, &c., handed down from father to son.—See the account of St. Grellan's crozier, in “The Tribes and Customs of Hymany,” edited by Mr. O'Donovan, for the Irish Archaeological Society, p. 81, note.

² Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 84, from whom the most of this account of the Comorbans and Erenachs is taken.

ground of a nature most hurtful to the cause of religion.

It was towards the close of this same century that the attention of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, was directed to the condition of the Church in Ireland. He saw the evils that threatened it, and the disorders that were gaining ground; and with the energy natural to his character, this celebrated prelate immediately exerted himself to check their growth. He addressed several letters to the Irish princes and bishops. One was written to Gothric, the Danish king of Dublin, whose city and bishop, it may be remembered, was lately placed under his own episcopal care. Another epistle was forwarded to Turlogh, monarch of Ireland—a prince, perhaps, of some abilities, but unhappily too much occupied in the civil wars of the country to be in a condition to perform any real service to the Church. However, he was the only person in the island who had sufficient power to remedy in any measure the disorders of religion and morals; and Lanfranc, therefore, deemed it necessary to stir him up on behalf of the Church's welfare, in the following mild and courteous language:—

“ Lanfranc, sinner, and unworthy Archbishop of the holy church of Canterbury, to Turlogh, the renowned King of Ireland—benediction, service, and prayers.

“ In no respect does Almighty God shew greater

mercy to the earth than when those are advanced to spiritual or temporal dominion who love peace and justice ; and especially when the kingdoms of this world are entrusted to the control of righteous monarchs. Hence peace springs up, discord is lulled to sleep ; and, to embrace every thing in few words, the observance of the Christian religion is secured. This blessing, every prudent observer perceives, has been conferred by divine grace on the people of Ireland, when the Almighty conceded to your excellency the right of royal authority over that land. For we have received such an account from our brother and fellow-bishop, Patrick, of your highness's pious and humble bearing towards good men—your rigorous severity to the depraved, and the prudent equity of your conduct towards all, that although we have never seen you, we yet love you as if we had ; and would give you wholesome advice, and serve you with the utmost sincerity, just as if we had both seen and were well acquainted with you.

“ But in the midst of much that pleases us, some matters have been narrated that please us not : how that in your kingdom every one at pleasure abandons his lawful wife for no canonical cause ; and, with most reprehensible temerity, unites himself in marriage or concubinage to another, perhaps a near relation of his own, or of his deserted wife, or else one that has been similarly abandoned by some equally wicked husband—that bishops are conse-

crated by one bishop only—that infants are baptised without consecrated chrism—that holy orders are conferred by bishops for money. That these and similar abuses are contrary to evangelic and apostolic authority, to the decrees of sacred canons, and the institution of all the orthodox fathers who have gone before us, no one even moderately versed in sacred writings can be ignorant; which, the more they are hateful in the sight of God and His saints, so much the more earnestly should they be restrained by your commands without delay; and if your prohibition be insufficient for their correction, the perpetrators of them ought to be punished with the utmost rigour of your authority. For no greater or more acceptable offering can you present unto God than a steady desire to govern your kingdom, both in spiritual and temporal matters, according to the just and proper laws.

“ Wherefore, ever mindful of the divine judgment, before which you must one day give account to God of the kingdom committed to your charge, command the bishops and all the religious men to come together; be present with your nobles in their assembly; endeavour to drive away from your dominions these depraved customs, and all that is disapproved by the sacred laws; so that the King of kings and Lord of lords, when He shall behold your royal majesty obedient in every particular to His commands, gentle towards His servants and the faithful, through fear and love of Him, and enraged

with divine zeal against the enemies of divine religion, He himself also may favourably hear the prayers of you and of your people, may crush your enemies, and grant you continual peace in this age, and in a future, life eternal.”¹

It is probable that Lanfranc here enumerated almost all the grave corruptions that had been insinuated into the Irish Church. One of these was the natural result of the anarchy of the times, which had enabled the licentious and profane to shake off all the control of religion. With respect to the practice of episcopal consecration by one bishop only, a learned writer² has attempted to shew that this charge originated in a misapprehension of the archbishop; and that the custom only existed with respect to the consecration of the *Chorepiscopi*—an order that was kept up longer in Ireland than anywhere else. How far this is correct, I shall not undertake to determine; and yet the story of the ordination of Colum-cille³ is alone sufficient to make one suspect that the assertion of Lanfranc was only too well grounded. And, besides, it must be borne in mind that the archbishop derived his acquaintance with the state of the Church in Ireland, not from mere idle rumour, but from the testimony of his own suffragan, Patrick, bishop of Dublin. This,

¹ Ussher's Sylloge, ep. xxvii. This epistle was written in the year 1074.

² Lauigan, vol. iii. p. 477.

³ See before, Chapter V. p. 38.

therefore, increases the improbability that he could have made a mistake on so important a matter.

Lanfranc likewise notices among the evils of the Church, “that infants were baptised without consecrated chrism.” The practice of anointing children with holy oil at their baptisms did not obtain among the Irish until a later period than that now under review, although the antiquity of the custom elsewhere is unquestioned. Its origin may be traced at least as high as the early part of the fourth century; and as it must have been in very general reception in the fifth, one is surprised that it had not found its way into Ireland. The omission of the practice, however, ought scarcely to have been ranked among the abuses of the times. It was never regarded as an essential part of the baptismal ceremonies, or as designed for any other use than edification. It was intended to remind the person brought to baptism that he was about to be made partaker of the true olive-tree—Jesus Christ; for, being cut out of a wild olive-tree, and engrafted into a good one, he was to be a partaker of the fatness of that good tree.¹ Whatever opinion, therefore, one may form of the value of the ceremony itself, it is confessedly one of those matters which it is in the power of any local Church to introduce or to give up, according to particular circumstances.²

¹ Bingham, vol. iii. p. 570.

² “With regard to baptising without chrism, Lanfranc was greatly mistaken in supposing that either the apostles or evan-

Troublesome times are not very favourable to the growth of piety and learning ; yet we learn from the Irish annals and similar sources, that even in the midst of this dark period, there flourished in Ireland many learned and pious men, chiefly monks and bishops, whose prayers ascended up to heaven night and day, for the well-being and safety of the Church. Irish monks also continued to frequent foreign countries ; and among these may be mentioned the name of Marianus Scotus, the chronicler, who was born in Ireland, and lived for some time as a monk in the monastery of Clonard. Domnald also, an Irish bishop, would appear to have been one of those who, amid many discouragements, devoted themselves to pursuits of learning. He and some others sent a letter to Archbishop Lanfranc, in which they propounded to him a few questions on theological and secular subjects. One point they wished to be informed on was, whether the opinion prevailed in the English and other Churches, that it was necessary to the salvation of infants that they should receive the eucharist, as well as be baptised. In the answer he addressed to Domnald, Lanfranc of course assured him that no such opinion obtained in England ; and he gave him reasons to shew why

gelists, or all the fathers and canons, prescribed the use of chrism in baptism. In itself it is not a rite at all essential to the validity of this sacrament. Nor was it in early times practised in baptism, but immediately after it, as belonging to confirmation."—*Lanigan*, vol. iii. p. 478.

it could not be rightly held. But with respect to some purely literary questions that had been put to him, the reply of the archbishop was to this effect :—“ You sent us questions of secular letters to be solved ; but it does not become the episcopal office to be engaged in studies of this kind. Formerly, indeed, we wasted our youth in these matters ; but when we succeeded to the pastoral care, we resolved that they should be laid aside.”¹ This, perhaps, was intended as a gentle rebuke to those learned doctors who deemed such matters not unworthy of their attention. To us, however, it is a proof that, notwithstanding the wars of the Danes, and the calamities of the Church, there were still some who found sufficient leisure and retirement to follow such humanising pursuits of literature as were then within their reach. And one would form an erroneous view of the state of things even in that age, who could suppose such men likely to be so much engrossed with “secular letters,” as to become negligent of their psalms and hours, and the still higher study of the holy Scriptures.

¹ Ussher's *Sylloge*, ep. xxviii.

CHAPTER XI.

GILLEBERT, BISHOP OF LIMERICK — HIS PLAN OF REFORMATION — CELSUS, ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH — SYNOD OF FIADH-MAC-ÆNGUSSA — OFFICE OF APOSTOLIC LEGATE INTRODUCED INTO IRELAND — SYNOD OF RATH-BREASAIL — ST. MALACHY.

THE exertions of Lanfranc were vigorously seconded by St. Anselm, the succeeding archbishop of Canterbury, who, in several letters to the Irish princes and bishops, urged the necessity of removing the abuses pointed out by his predecessor.¹ Among the prelates in Ireland he found one, in particular, who was quite willing to enter into his plans, and to promote, as far as possible, the work of reformation. This was Gille, or Gillebert, bishop of Limerick, who in early life had been acquainted with St. Anselm, and had spent some time with him at Rouen. But their fortunes being cast upon different waters, the two friends had long lost sight of each other. St. Anselm, from the monastery of Bec, in Normandy, succeeded to the primacy of England; while Gillebert was advanced to the see of Limerick. It was the latter who renewed their acquaintance in the year 1106. He wrote Anselm a letter of con-

¹ These letters may be seen in Ussher's *Sylloge*, ep. xxxiii. xxxv. and xxxvi.

gratulation upon the successful termination of his difficulties with the English court, and accompanied his letter with a present of twenty-five small pearls. In acknowledging the receipt of this gift, St. Anselm took occasion to allude to the religious disorders of the country, and to suggest the propriety of something being immediately done towards their removal. He advised Gillebert to try and arouse the Irish king and bishops to the necessity of engaging in this work, “ by setting before them the rewards prepared for the good, and the miseries that await the wicked.”

Not inattentive to this advice, Gillebert exerted himself to correct the evils of the Church. His first care was directed to the liturgies then used in Ireland. He wished to reduce all these to one uniform system ; or rather, to prevail on the bishops and abbots to agree to use only the liturgy that was then sanctioned by the Bishop of Rome. Such a scheme was both wise in itself, and entirely harmonised with the views of Pope Gregory VII., who had long successfully endeavoured to bring the other European Churches into complete conformity with Rome, and thus to unite them more closely with the chair of St. Peter. This also formed a part of Gillebert’s projected reformation. The Irish Church had for several centuries been independent of the papal power, and had directed its own affairs, uncontrolled by any external authority. But Gillebert, during his sojourn on the

continent, appears to have been captivated by the seductive theories of unity which a large portion of the Church had already espoused. And these were so very attractive in themselves, and promised so many advantages to religion, by consolidating its interests and increasing the security of the Church, that one can scarcely wonder at the readiness with which he received them. He saw that a closer union with Rome would extricate the Church from the power of the provincial chieftains, by whom its rights had been so often trampled upon ; but he overlooked the sacrifice of principle that was to be the price of the immediate benefit. Nor was such forgetfulness confined to the age of Gillebert. In every period of the Church's history, how many are found willing to purchase present advantage at the cost of high principle !

Gillebert recommended his views in a tract, which he shortly published, and entitled *Of the Ecclesiastical Use*. In the preface to this treatise he says that, at the request and by the command of many of the Irish prelates and priests, he endeavoured to describe in it the canonical custom of reciting the hours, and performing the whole ecclesiastical office ; "in order," he adds, "that those diverse and schismatical offices, which delude nearly all Ireland, may give way to one Catholic and Roman one. For what could be more indecent or schismatical than that he who is most skilled in one office, should become as an unlearned man and laic

in another Church? Therefore whoever professes himself a member of the Catholic Church, as he is joined in one body by one faith, hope, charity, so is he commanded to praise God with one mouth and order along with the other members. Whence the apostle says, ‘that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.’ As, then, the dispersion of tongues, caused through pride, is drawn to unity in apostolical humility; so the confusion of ordinals, arisen through negligence and presumption, is to be led to the consecrated rule of the Roman Church by your zeal and humility.” Gillebert then proceeds to explain the different degrees and offices in the Church, in order to shew them “ how unity of customs ought to be observed by the faithful.” He draws a picture or chart of a Church, on *which* he apportions the various sub-divisions of the Christian body; and these he goes on to explain more particularly. It is sufficient here to notice his fundamental principle, “ that all the members of the Church are subject to one Bishop, to wit, Christ, and to His vicar, the blessed apostle Peter, and to the prelate presiding in his chair.”¹

But the work of reformation was more effectually carried on by Celsus, archbishop of Armagh, an active and laborious prelate. Celsus succeeded to the chair of St. Patrick in the year 1105. He owed his elevation to the influence of the family that had now, for nearly two centuries, retained

¹ See this Treatise in Ussher’s Sylloge, ep. xxx.

possession of the archiepiscopal revenues. He was himself a member of this usurping clan; but, unlike his immediate predecessors in the rights of the see, was in holy orders.

The archbishop commenced his reformations by convening, in the year 1111, the synod of Fiadh-mac-ængussa, which was attended by a large proportion of the prelates, nobles, and clergy of Ireland. Many regulations were enacted in it relating to the improvement of the clergy and the amelioration of manners.¹ But the synod is chiefly remarkable as being the last of those ancient national councils where the Church acted without the presence of a legate apostolic. And here I may observe, that the constitution of those old synods had a greater resemblance to our modern parliaments than to assemblies strictly ecclesiastical. They were, in general, national conventions more than synodical meetings, and were almost always attended by the king and nobles, as well as the bishops and clergy. Sometimes they were summoned by the spiritual, and sometimes by the temporal power; and their proceedings were not entirely confined to the affairs of religion.

The office of apostolic legate was about this time introduced into Ireland. Gillebert of Limerick was the first appointed to discharge its duties, and was probably recommended to the notice of the court of Rome by the zeal he had manifested in

¹ Lanigan, iv. p. 37.

behalf of the papal claims. He exercised his new powers for the first time at the synod of Rath-bre-sail, convened shortly after that already noticed ; and here, as was usual for the apostolic legates, he took precedence of Celsus, the chief bishop of the country. Several laymen were also present at this synod, which was principally occupied in making a new division of the Irish dioceses, and fixing their boundaries. The whole country was divided into two provinces—those of Armagh and Cashel, whose prelates were endowed with metropolitan authority over the twelve bishoprics in their respective departments. The supreme power remained vested in the see of Armagh, as formerly ; and Cashel had recently succeeded to the place of second honour, once enjoyed by the more ancient see of Emly. Limerick and Waterford, two of the Danish cities, were attached to the province of Cashel ; but Dublin, their other settlement, still remained subject to Canterbury. The synod likewise made some other regulations, confirming the revenues of the clergy and the Church-lands to the bishops for their support, and exempting the ecclesiastical possessions from the payment of tribute and other taxes.¹

The reforming party soon received a powerful auxiliary in the person of Malachy O'Morgair, one of the most remarkable bishops of his age. Like many of the Irish saints, he was descended from an ancient and honourable family. At an early age he

¹ Lanigan, iv. p. 41-43.

placed himself under the guidance of Imar, an holy anchorite, whose cell was situated near the church of Armagh. This man was living a very austere life, in constant watchings and fastings; and it was the desire of Malachy to imitate his severity. He did so, to the surprise of most of his acquaintance, some of whom thought him too young to subject himself to such hardships, while others feared that he undertook more than his strength and perseverance would enable him to go through with. His steadiness, however, disappointed their fears, and his example stirred up other young persons to follow his steps, and to learn from Imar the practice of obedience, humility, and silence.

Malachy soon attracted the attention of Celsus, the archbishop, who admitted him to deacon's orders before he had attained the canonical age. After his ordination he applied himself publicly to every work of piety, especially to those that were least honourable. His greatest care was in attending to the burial of the deceased poor, which he conceived to be a work not less of humility than charity. At the age of twenty-five, Celsus advanced him to the priesthood, although he wanted five years to complete the usual term; and not content with this mark of favour, he employed him in the important work of reforming the Church. Malachy gave his assistance in this task with great alacrity. It was chiefly through his instrumentality that "the apostolic sanctions and decrees of the holy fathers, and,

in particular, the customs of the Roman Church, were ordained in all the churches." He introduced the Roman method of reciting the hours into the diocese of Armagh. He also restored the practice of confession, the rite of confirmation, and the solemnisation of matrimony; all which, according to St. Bernard, had fallen into disuse in the same diocese.

To increase his acquaintance with the customs of the Universal Church, Malachy visited Malchus, bishop of Lismore, "an old man, full of days and virtue, and the wisdom of God was in him." Malchus, although a native of Ireland, had been a monk of Winchester, where he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the discipline and customs then sanctioned at Rome. When St. Malachy departed from Lismore, he returned to his friends in the north, and was next engaged in restoring the monastery of Bangor, which had remained in ruins since its destruction by the Danes. With ten brethren he constructed on its site a wooden oratory, compact and firm, and sufficient to afford them the accommodation they required. In this humble edifice they renewed the service of God, as in the ancient days, with similar devotion, but not so numerous a company. Malachy was appointed the governor of the restored monastery, but was soon called to a higher office in the Church, having been prevailed upon to accept the vacant bishopric of Connor. He was consecrated about the thirtieth

year of his age, and found his diocese in a sad state of disorder. But his unwearied exertions, before very long, succeeded in effecting a salutary change. Instead of ruined churches and neglected ordinances, we read that the churches were rebuilt, and clergymen ordained for them, the sacraments duly administered, confession made, and the people regular at prayers.

The days of Archbishop Celsus were now drawing to a close. It was by his sanction or sufferance that all recent alterations had taken place in the system of the Irish Church. But one great abuse remained to be corrected. It was the desire of Celsus, as well as of all honest Churchmen, that the hereditary succession, so long a disgrace to the see of Armagh, should be abolished. Accordingly, on his deathbed, he nominated Malachy his successor; and enjoined all the Irish, and in particular the two kings of Munster, to use their best exertions to see him seated in the chair of St. Patrick. Thus he hoped to terminate an evil that had caused no less scandal to the Church than injury to practical religion. Celsus died in the year 1129, at Ardpatrick, in the county of Limerick; and was buried at Lismore, in compliance with his own request. Malachy permitted himself to be nominated to the vacant see, only upon condition that he should be allowed to resign it, so soon as it was rescued from its present unbecoming situation. The bishops reluctantly consented to this arrangement, and immediately made

every exertion to establish him at Armagh, but for some time their efforts did not meet with success.

The old usurping family had power enough to place Maurice, one of their kinsmen, in the archiepiscopal chair ; and he retained possession for five years. Upon his death they intruded Niell, another of their connexions ; but he was at length expelled, and Malachy established in the primatial see. The most important liberties of the Church being thus at last effectually vindicated, after a long and arduous struggle, the next three years were spent by the new archbishop in perfecting the reforms he had commenced during the lifetime of Celsus. At the end of this period he resigned the primacy to Gelasius, in accordance with the agreement made with the Irish prelates before his elevation ; and retired to the bishopric of Down, which he then separated from his former see of Connor.

Malachy had not been long settled in his new position, when he conceived a desire to visit Rome, to obtain palls for the Irish archbishops, and to acquaint the pope with the condition of the Church in Ireland. But he was so very popular in the country, that when his intention became known, the people endeavoured to dissuade him from putting it into execution. They were unwilling that he should absent himself from them even for a time. But Malachy was not the person to alter a resolution once seriously formed. He therefore set forth on his journey to the imperial city. On

his way he stopped at the Abbey of Clairvaux, where he became acquainted with the illustrious St. Bernard, his future biographer. At Rome he was kindly received by Innocent II., who then filled the papal chair. He remained there a month, visiting all that was to be seen, and frequently conversing with the pope respecting the general state of religion in Ireland. As Gillebert of Limerick was now, through age, unequal to the duties of his office, Innocent conferred on Malachy the dignity of apostolic legate. But he did not grant the palls as readily as was expected. He desired Malachy, upon his return, to convene a synod of the clergy and nobles, and through them to make an unanimous application for the palls, which should then be granted. The pope dismissed him in the most gracious manner. Taking off his mitre, Innocent placed it on the head of Malachy, and gave him likewise the stole and maniple he himself used to wear when officiating. Then the saint being saluted with the kiss of peace, was sent on his way, supported, says St. Bernard, by the apostolic benediction and authority.

In returning to Ireland, Malachy paid another visit to Clairvaux, where he left a few of his companions, to be instructed in the discipline of the Cistercians, intending at a future period to introduce that order into his own country. Several letters subsequently passed upon this subject between St. Bernard and him. In the year 1142, St.

Bernard sent over the Irish monks who had been left at Clairvaux, and who were now fully qualified to establish a branch of their order in Ireland. They were accompanied by a few Cistercian monks of French extraction, and fixed their abode at Mellifont in the county of Louth ; where, by the exertions of St. Malachy, a monastery was soon erected, and liberally endowed by O'Carol, prince of Oriel.

In the mean time the affair of the palls was not forgotten. Malachy procured a synod to be held at Holmpatrick, in the year 1148, which was numerously attended by the bishops and clergy. Gelasius, the archbishop of Armagh, sanctioned it with his presence, but Malachy presided as the apostolic legate. The synod was occupied for the first three days of its sitting with matters relating to the general welfare of the Church. Upon the fourth day the question of the palls was brought forward. The synod agreed to solicit them, and Malachy, at his own request, was deputed to make the application to the pope. Accordingly he set sail from Ireland, expecting to meet Eugenius III. (one of the successors of Innocent, who was now dead) in France ; but he was disappointed, owing to unforeseen delays. However, he proceeded to visit his friend St. Bernard, at Clairvaux, intending afterwards to prosecute his journey to Rome. But here he was suddenly taken ill, and died after a sickness of five days. He was buried in the oratory of the Blessed Virgin at Clair-

vaux, and a funeral oration was delivered over his remains by St. Bernard, which is still extant among the printed works of that father.

In reviewing the character of St. Malachy, it is impossible not to perceive that he was in a pre-eminent degree holy and devout, energetic in self-discipline, and untiring in his exertions for the improvement of the Church. Even the regard entertained for him by Bernard, which was first imbibed during a casual passing visit to Clairvaux, is sufficient to prove him a person of no ordinary merit. Yet St. Malachy was not altogether removed from the influence of prejudice. He had deeply imbibed those theories of unity which the energies of Pope Gregory VII. had been the principal means of spreading through the Church. With a strange inconsistency, he contributed to rescue his native Church from one system of subjection, and to bring it under another. Unlike the earlier divines of Ireland, he felt no regard for any of their local customs and time-honoured traditions: and if they once erred in a too obstinate adherence to such traditions, his failing, on the other hand, lay in their unqualified condemnation. With him, whatever was not Roman was by consequence not catholic.

There can be no question but that Malachy was influenced by the purest motives in his attempt to bring the Irish Church under the power of the popes. Without any doubt, he believed implicitly the doctrine, then so general in the Church, that the bishop

of Rome was the sole successor of St. Peter, the sole vicar of Christ, and that he alone held “the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.” He perceived his own Church in a state of much confusion, while order and piety were on the side of Rome. Who, then, can be surprised that he should have adopted views appearing to promise many solid benefits, and enjoying the recommendation of men so learned and pious as the Bernards and the Anselms of the twelfth century?

By abandoning, however, the ancient theology of the Irish Church, St. Malachy lost a great opportunity of vindicating the authority of the episcopal order against the injuries this theory eventually inflicted upon it. Had he refused to be bound to Rome by any other ties than those ancient ones of a common faith and a tender affection, there is no saying what important consequences might not have been the result of his firmness. The natural tendency of the papal power was to concentrate all spiritual authority in the Roman pontiff, to diminish the power of local bishops, to encourage exemption from their just authority and influence. Most of the more recent religious orders disconnected themselves from the control of their own bishops, under the plea of being subject only to the pope. In a word, disorders too numerous to be mentioned have had their origin in this departure from the primitive ecclesiastical constitution; and to this cause also may be traced that unbridled licentiousness of modern times, which has so nearly overthrown the whole authority

of the Church. For when men had acquired the habit of undervaluing the sanction of their bishops, acting in independence of their authority, and, as was often the case, maligning their persons, it was an easy thing to advance one step further, and, in times of confusion, to throw off all restraint, and refuse submission to all rule. Many of these evils might have been averted or diminished had the firmness of Malachy enabled him to walk in “the old paths;” at least, he would have been a witness against the undue pretensions of the papacy. Few, perhaps, were more favourably circumstanced to render this service to the Church. His personal influence was so great that he was able to direct the minds of his countrymen as he thought fit. He would not have the appearance of opposing an established power, for he found the Irish Church independent of the see of Rome; and no necessity obliged him to solicit the papal interference. And it is a circumstance most worthy of observation, that all his reform, all his changes and improvements, had been effected before he made any application to the see of Rome for its sanction or countenance.

But although one may regret that Malachy did not adopt some better course, it would ill become the present age to sit in judgment upon him. Mr. Coleridge has well observed, that “to speak gently of our forefathers, is at once piety and policy. Nor let it be forgotten, that only by making the detection of their errors the occasion of our own wisdom, do

we acquire a right to censure them at all." So long as this remark remains true, the present time is not one that has any right to be thus censorious. Self-opiniated, undisciplined, and proud, we should make but poor judges of the defects of our forefathers. If they were carried away by an unreal theory of catholic unity, too many of us are unacquainted with the true one; and until we have entirely removed our own ignorance, it would ill suit us to leave the rank of learners.

CHAPTER XII.

ARRIVAL OF CARDINAL PAPARO — SYNOD OF KELLS — DERMOD MAC-MURCHAD — ENGLISH INVASION — SYNOD OF CASHEL.

BUT the papal power was not as yet formally recognised in Ireland. The palls had not been sent to the archbishops. Further delay, however, was to be avoided; for the restless spirit of the Irish might as soon reject what before they consented to receive — now that the master-mind, the guide of the whole movement, was no more. Accordingly, Eugenius despatched Cardinal Paparo to Ireland with the necessary instructions. The cardinal arrived towards the close of the year 1151. He spent six months in making himself acquainted with the condition and wants of the Church, and furthering his plans for the establishment of the Roman supremacy. At length he summoned a synod, which assembled at Kells, in the county of Meath, on the 9th of March, 1152. It was attended by a large number of the bishops and inferior clergy. The synod passed canons against the crimes of usury and simony, which appear to have still afflicted the Church. The payment of tithes was regulated, and a new division

of the dioceses made out. To the two existing provinces — Armagh and Cashel — two others were added, with equal metropolitan authority,¹ Dublin and Tuam. Dublin was to rank next to Armagh, and its revenues were improved by the confiscation of a part of the land belonging to the ancient bishopric at Glendaloch. It was the intention of Paparo, that, upon the death of the bishop of Glendaloch, the entire revenues should be transferred to Dublin, and the more ancient see suppressed. But in this respect his wishes were opposed by the Irish, who had a great regard for their “Holy Church in the mountains,” as it was called. However, his plans were ultimately successful: for (it may not be out of place to mention here) the bishopric was at length sequestered in the reign of King Henry II., and the seven churches of Glendaloch allowed to fall to ruin.²

Cardinal Paparo presented palls to each of the four archbishops. By his advice their respective provinces were made nearly commensurate with the civil division of the country — a very useful arrangement, inasmuch as it did not place under their superintendence a more extensive territory than they could be reasonably expected to attend to. From this time a peculiar custom has obtained in the Irish Church. The archbishops are wont personally to visit their

¹ Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 146.

² See “A Letter concerning the Palls sent to Ireland,” in Harris and Ware, Bps. at Glendaloch.

respective suffragan dioceses in every third year. They meet the local bishops and clergy in the different cathedral churches—inquire into the state of the various parishes—remedy abuses—and hear appeals. Their authority extends over the bishop as well as his clergy; and, from the date of the issues of the summonses to attend the visitation, the suffragan bishop yields his jurisdiction for the time being to his superior, who institutes to any benefices that happen to fall vacant during the period of visitation, the bishop of the diocese presenting as if he were a lay patron. It is needless to observe upon the advantages liable to result from such a close episcopal inspection, and on the service that such a system could render the Church, if effectually carried into practice, and made more than an empty form. The archbishop, the bishop, and the local clergy, constitute, in a manner, a provincial synod, where, by a slight alteration in the present mode of proceeding, every important matter relating to the welfare of the diocese might, with benefit, be made the subject of careful deliberation.

Cardinal Paparo having distributed the palls, and concluded his other business, dissolved the synod, and returned to Rome. The Irish clergy, left to themselves, continued to hold numerous provincial synods, and to evince much anxiety to alter and improve the tone of their Church; but while thus engaged, events were on the eve of occurrence that were to exercise an important influence upon

the condition of the country and the welfare of the Church—an influence which would have been serviceable to the progress of civilisation, and to the permanent interests of religion, had it not been marred by a cold and heartless policy.

Dermod Mac-Murchad, prince of Leinster, was one of the most turbulent among the petty chieftains of Ireland. He was rapacious, cruel, and proud, and was naturally an object of dislike to those who were under his power. A quarrel between this chieftain and Terence O'Ruarc, prince of Breffny, was the primary cause of the English invasion. O'Ruarc had a beautiful wife, named Dervorgal, for whom Dermod conceived an unlawful passion, which he gratified by carrying her off from her husband's roof, assisted, it is said, by the aid of her own brother. He joined O'Conor, prince of Connaught, in an attack upon the territory of Breffny; and while the soldiers were engaged in their usual work of plunder, he succeeded in the abduction of the wretched woman. Dervorgal, however, was soon recovered by her husband, whose heart burned with an implacable desire to revenge the injuries he had sustained. He pursued Dermod for many years with various kinds of annoyance, always siding with his enemies; until at last, upon the accession of Roderic O'Conor to the throne of Ireland, he had the satisfaction to aid that prince in driving Mac-Murchad out of Leinster, and placing another of his family in the government of the province.

It was now Dermod's turn to be goaded on by revenge. Desirous to regain possession of his lost territory, he applied for succour to some of his own tributary chieftains; but they had felt his tyranny too long to be willing to aid him in the time of trouble. Accordingly, he determined to lay his grievances before the throne of Henry II. king of England, and to solicit his interference. With sixty followers, he arrived at Bristol; but, learning here that Henry was in Aquitaine, he made all haste to proceed to that country. Henry received him in Normandy with much courtesy, and listened attentively to his complaints; but circumstances of a pressing nature prevented him from being able to be of any immediate use to Dermod. All he could do for him was to promise assistance at a future period; and to give him a letter to some of his English lords, authorising them to engage in the service of Mac-Murchad, if they should think fit. With this letter Dermod returned to England; but it was some time before he could prevail on any of Henry's knights and barons to espouse his quarrel. They were not willing to engage in a cause that promised little honourable reward. But Dermod Mac-Murchad was so earnest in his entreaties, that he at last overcame their reluctance. By engaging to give him his daughter, Eva, in marriage, as well as to make him heir of his dominions, he prevailed on Richard Strongbow, earl of Chepstow and Pembroke, to promise his assistance early in the ensuing spring. By

similar promises of rich possessions, he engaged in his behalf Robert Fitz-Stephen and Maurice Fitzgerald, two Norman knights who had settled in Wales; and being thus partially successful, he hastened back to Ireland to prepare for the reception of his new allies. Some of these, headed by Robert Fitz-Stephen, arrived in Ireland in the month of May A.D. 1169, and were soon reinforced by fresh arrivals; but the army of Earl Strongbow, consisting of 1200 foot soldiers and 200 knights, did not land, owing to some unexpected delays, until the eve of the feast of St. Bartholomew in the year 1170.¹

It does not form a part of the plan of this history to enter into the details of the English invasion. Sufficient it is to observe, that the success which attended the Norman arms was attributable, not more to their superior military skill than to the treacheries and jealousies that divided the Irish forces. Henry himself landed at Waterford in the year 1171. He appeared rather as a protector than an enemy of the Irish; and most of the provincial chieftains in the south and east were glad to submit to his authority. While he remained in the country there were no battles fought—all was apparent tranquillity. The inferior princes seemed rather proud of submitting to one whom they delighted to call “the Son of the Empress,” in allusion to the

¹ Leland, Hist. of Ireland, vol. i. p. 14-23.

dignity of the Empress Matilda, his mother. The O'Nialls of Ulster, and Roderic O'Conor, the unfortunate monarch of Ireland, alone hesitated to acknowledge his authority; but Roderic was soon obliged to make a show of apparent submission, and to receive the English king as his liege lord.

While Henry continued in Ireland, he endeavoured to evince his anxiety for the welfare of the Church, as it was of the utmost importance to his interests that the clergy should appear as little as possible opposed to him. Accordingly, almost his first care was to convene a synod for the ostensible object of removing ecclesiastical abuses, but, in reality, to secure the allegiance of the clergy. The synod met at Cashel in the year 1172. It was attended by Laurence archbishop of Dublin, Cathlicus archbishop of Tuam, Donald archbishop of Cashel, and many of the bishops and inferior clergy. Gelasius archbishop of Armagh was not present. He pleaded as his excuse the infirmities of age; but the true cause of his non-attendance is to be found in the fact, that he belonged to the northern part of the island, where the English arms had not as yet penetrated, and where Henry's authority was still unrecognised.

The acts of the synod of Cashel are only seven in number. The first directs that the faithful throughout Ireland do contract and observe lawful marriages, rejecting those with their relations, either by consanguinity or affinity.

II. That infants be catechised before the door of the church, and baptised in the holy font in the baptismal churches.

III.¹ That all the faithful do pay the tithe of animals, corn, and other produce to the church of which they are parishioners.

IV. That all ecclesiastical lands and property connected with them be quite exempt from the exactions of all laymen. And, especially, that neither the petty kings nor counts, nor any powerful men in Ireland, nor their sons with their families, do exact, as was usual, victuals and hospitality, or entertainments, in the ecclesiastical districts, or presume to extort them by force; and that the detestable food or contributions which used to be required four times in the year from the farms belonging to churches by the neighbouring counts, shall not be claimed any more.

V. That in case of a murder committed by laymen, and of their compounding for it with their enemies, clergymen, their relatives, are not to pay part of the fine (or erick), but that as they were not concerned in the perpetration of the murder, so they are to be exempted from the payment of money.

VI. That all the faithful, lying in sickness, do, in the presence of their confessor and neighbours, make their will with due solemnity, dividing, in case

¹ See Appendix.

they have wives and children,—excepting their debts and servants' wages,—their moveable goods into three parts, and bequeathing one for the children, and another for the lawful wife, and the third for the funeral obsequies. And if haply they have no lawful progeny, let the goods be divided into two parts, between himself and his wife. And if his lawful wife be dead, let them be divided between himself and his children.

VII. That to those who die with a good confession, due respect be paid by means of masses and wakes and a decent burial. Likewise that all divine matters be henceforth conducted agreeably to the practices of the holy Church, according as observed by the Anglican Church.

It is the latter clause of this last canon that would appear to be the most important of them all. By its provision, the Irish Church was henceforth to conform to the rites and ceremonies and usages of the Church in England. Gille of Limerick, it may be remembered, had attempted to introduce a change, in some respects similar, when he endeavoured to prevail on the clergy to adopt the Roman liturgies and customs to the exclusion of all that differed from them. He was unsuccessful, and neither Malachy nor Paparo were able afterwards to enforce such a general conformity. But from the date of this synod a great change passed upon the Church, the consequence of this canon. In those parts of the country where English laws and usages prevailed,—*i. e.* with-

in the *Pale* (as the English part of Ireland was called),—the Church was in a manner *Anglicised*: it lost much of its individuality, and became the Church of a party. This was, in part, the natural operation of the seventh canon of the synod of Cashel; but it was also the result of circumstances which are yet to be noticed.

CHAPTER XIII.

SYNOD OF WATERFORD — BULLS OF ADRIAN IV. AND ALEXANDER III. — LAURENCE O'TOOLE, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

NEARLY three years had elapsed since the synod of Cashel, when another was held, in 1174, at Waterford, by direction of King Henry. Nicholas abbot of Wallingford, and William Fitz-Adelm presided as the representatives of the English monarch, and many of the bishops and clergy were present.

At this synod two papal bulls were read conferring the sovereignty of Ireland upon Henry II. One of them was the celebrated bull of Pope Adrian IV., which had been in the possession of the English king since the year 1155, but which, from unknown reasons, he had kept secret until now. It has been asserted that the clergy were acquainted with the existence of this bull long before it was publicly made known; and that Henry had been privately practising with them, and successfully endeavouring to make them betray the liberties of their country.¹

¹ See Phelan's Policy of the Church of Rome in Ireland, chapter i. “The connexion of Ireland (this author writes)

But this assertion appears to have been hazarded without sufficient authority. It is one of those unfounded and unfair insinuations against the integrity of the ancient clergy, in which it is so much the custom for modern writers to indulge. And it is entirely destitute of probability ; since the share that Henry II. had in the murder of St. Thomas Becket naturally rendered him obnoxious to the great body of the clergy throughout the entire western Church. He was, therefore, almost the last person with whom they would wish to have any dealings ; certainly he was not one whose favour and patronage they would court.

The bull of Adrian commences with a compliment to the religious zeal by which it pretends that King Henry was actuated in his contemplated invasion of Ireland. “ Full laudably and profitably hath your magnificence conceived the design of propagating your glorious renown on earth, and completing your reward of eternal happiness in heaven : while as a catholic prince you are intent on enlarging the borders of the Church, teaching the truth of the Christian faith, exterminating the roots of vice from the field of the Lord, and for the more convenient

with the crown of England originated in a compact between Henry Plantagenet, Pope Adrian the Fourth, and *the Irish relates of the day.*” Mr. Phelan had no authority for associating the Irish bishops with the papal schemes, except, indeed, an equally groundless conjecture of Dr. Leland, Hist. vol. i. p. 10.

execution of this purpose, requiring the counsel and favour of the apostolic see." It then proceeds to lay down the doctrine that, "without doubt, Ireland and all the islands on which Christ, the sun of righteousness, hath shone, and which have received the doctrines of the Christian faith, do belong to the (temporal) jurisdiction of St. Peter, and of the Holy Roman Church." This was the foundation on which the papal right to dispose of Ireland was made to rest. The sovereignty of the island was bestowed upon Henry, in order (as the bull goes on to say) that the borders of the Church might be extended, and a general reformation effected in the manners of the people and the state of religion. But Pope Adrian reserved for himself and successors the annual pension of one penny from every house, as a tribute to the chair of St. Peter; and he covenanted with the king that the rights and liberties of the Church should remain sacred and inviolate for ever. In all other respects, he was to do whatever in his own judgment seemed most conducive to the honour of God, and the welfare of the land.¹

This is the substance of the papal rescript, read by the representatives of Henry before the synod of Waterford. It was supported by a later bull from

¹ The Bull of Adrian is printed in Ussher's *Sylloge*, Ep. 46 (Works, vol. iv. p. 546). It is translated in Leland's History, vol. i. p. 8. Dr. Lanigan observes, that this bull is not to be found in the "Bullarium Romanum," "the editors of which," he says, "were ashamed of it."

Pope Alexander III., confirming his predecessor's disposal of Ireland in the following words :

"Alexander, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his most dear son in Christ, the illustrious King of England, health and the apostolic benediction.

"Whereas the grants that are known to have been made for good reasons by our predecessors deserve to be ratified by a lasting confirmation ; we, walking in the footsteps of the venerable Pope Adrian, and regarding the fruit of our desires, do ratify and confirm the said pontiff's concession of the dominion of the kingdom of Ireland granted unto you—saving to St. Peter and the Holy Roman Church, as in England so also in Ireland, the annual pension of one penny from each house—so that the filthiness of that land being eradicated, a barbarous nation enrolled under a Christian name, may by your indulgence clothe itself with good morals, and the hitherto disorganised Church of those regions being reduced to good order, that nation through your instrumentality may henceforth effectually follow the name of the Christian profession."¹

The interference of Henry was solicited by one of the local chieftains, and his own subjects were rewarded for their assistance by large donations of land in that country. But he doubtless supposed that the promulgation of these bulls would tend greatly to confirm his newly acquired authority ;

¹ Ussher's Sylloge, Ep. 47.

and this may have been the result, so far as the clergy were concerned. The decisive terms of these papal documents may have convinced them of the impossibility of making any effectual efforts to recover the civil independence of Ireland. Now that the Church was subject to the see of Rome, how could they oppose a cause that was espoused by the papal power? They may, therefore, have seen that their true and only policy lay in endeavouring to secure the rights and liberties of the Church, and making the best possible terms for its permanent establishment. Every candid person, however, must lament the course pursued by Adrian¹ and Alexander. It was heartless and mean policy, intended to conciliate King Henry at the sacrifice of justice and of truth. In particular, the manner in which Alexander speaks of the Irish Church was altogether unjustifiable, and he must have known it to have been so. For it was not very long since a legate from Rome — Cardinal Paparo — had visited Ireland, and made such reforms in the synod of Kells as he considered necessary. Had the Church been in the condition hinted at in the papal bull, the decrees of that synod would have reference to many other matters beside the arrangement of dioceses and the distribution of

¹ “The love of his country (England), his wish to gratify Henry, and some other not very becoming reasons, prevailed over every other consideration, and the condescending pope, with great cheerfulness and alacrity, *took upon himself* to make over to Henry all Ireland.” — *Lanigan*, iv. p. 159.

palls. And the same may be said with respect to the synod of Cashel, the only council held by Henry for his commissioned reformation of the Church ; the canons of which, already before the reader, relating as they do mostly to matters of inferior moment, lead one naturally to infer that the condition of the Church was not then much, if at all, worse in Ireland, than in other countries. It suited these popes, however, to think otherwise ; and, although we say it with regret, it is nevertheless an undeniable truth, that the bishops of Rome for a long period followed the example set to them by these their predecessors, and continued to use the Irish people as mere tools for the advancement of their own private ends.

In the course they adopted towards the English invaders, the Irish clergy would appear to have been guided in a great measure by Laurence O'Toole, archbishop of Dublin, a man of much energy and decision of character. His father was head of the powerful clan of the O'Tooles of Wicklow ; and on his mother's side he was connected with the equally noble race of the Byrnes in the same county. Educated in the monastery of Glendaloch, he in time became its abbot, and was eventually elevated to the see of Dublin. His consecration took place at Christ Church, Dublin,¹ in the year 1162, in the presence of many of the bishops and people ; Gela-

¹ “ In ipsa Dublinensi Ecclesia.” Vita S. Laur. cap. x. Christ Church was at that time “ the Church of Dublin.”

sius, archbishop of Armagh, being the prelate who administered that sacred rite.

Carrying along with him, to his episcopal see, his habitual attachment to a monastic life, almost the first act of Laurence, after his consecration, was to change the canons secular of Christ Church Cathedral into regular canons of the order of Aroasia. Laurence himself joined the order, adopting its habit, and conforming to its rule. As frequently as his other duties would allow, he would take his meals in the refectory with the brethren, observe silence at the proper places and hours, and celebrate with them the various religious offices of the day. Sometimes also he would retire to Glendaloch for a few days, to enjoy a stricter seclusion, and to practise additional severities.

But these religious duties were soon interrupted by the troubles of the times, in which Laurence bore a conspicuous part. During the first confusion of the English invasion, he acted to the Irish sometimes as their adviser, and sometimes almost as their general. But he more frequently appeared in the character of mediator between the contending parties; and such were his abilities and sagacity, that he was not less respected by the English than revered by his own countrymen. He appears to have submitted to the authority of Henry without any remonstrance, since he was among the bishops that attended the synod of Cashel, summoned by the English king; and there is likewise reason to believe

that he was present at the synod of Waterford. The signature of Laurence is attached as a witness to a treaty of peace between Henry and Roderic the Irish monarch, which he himself was the chief instrument in bringing about.

Yet Henry entertained strong suspicions of the sincerity and good faith of the archbishop; and Laurence has been accused, perhaps not unjustly, of playing a double game. In the year 1175 he attended the third Lateran council, along with some other Irish prelates. Here he is said to have launched out into great abuse of the king, and to have given an exaggerated account of the evils he had inflicted upon Ireland. He also at that time obtained for his see many temporal grants and immunities which should not have been conceded without the permission of Henry. And what makes this conduct the more unbecoming is the circumstance of his having taken an oath, before leaving Ireland, not to do any thing at the council to the prejudice of the king's authority. Henry was so much displeased at the course the archbishop pursued, that he refused to see him, when, a few years after his return from Rome, he was sent into England to compose a quarrel which had broken out afresh between Roderic and the English monarch. Laurence was urgent in his entreaties to be admitted into the royal presence; but the king was inexorable. Having at this time occasion to pass over into Normandy, Henry gave orders that Laurence

should be detained in England, and not permitted to return to his own country. The archbishop, however, followed the king to France, but had scarcely landed in Normandy, when he was seized with a fever, which carried him off on Friday, the 14th of November, in the year 1180. He was canonised in the Church of Rome by Pope Honorius III. A.D. 1225.¹

¹ The life of Laurence is published in Messingham's *Flo-
rilegium*, p. 379. It was written by a monk of Augum.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOHN CUMIN, FIRST ENGLISH ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN—
ENGLISHMEN PROMOTED TO IRISH DIGNITIES—SYNOD OF
DUBLIN—ITS ACTS—CONSEQUENCES OF THE ENGLISH
INVASION—REMARKS ON THE POLICY ADOPTED TOWARDS
THE IRISH.

LAURENCE was succeeded in the see of Dublin by John Cumin, an Englishman, who was consecrated in the year 1182 by Pope Lucius III., being the first prelate of the Irish Church that ever received episcopal orders immediately from the papal chair. The custom thus introduced, of promoting natives of England to the higher ecclesiastical offices in Ireland, has ever since continued. In the see of Dublin alone no Irishman occupied the archiepiscopal chair during the long period intervening between the years 1182 and 1663 ; and it is also worthy of remark, that until the sixteenth century the occupants of this see, with very few exceptions, received their ordination directly either from England or from Rome. Political reasons were pleaded for thus filling the Irish sees with strangers to the customs and the feelings of the Church ; but, notwithstanding some apparent advantages, the practice has inflicted much injury upon the permanent interests of religion. In the first

place, it introduced, in the times now under review, a feeling of jealousy between the clergy of English and Irish race, by no means beneficial to the cause of piety. Besides, the English clergy too often came to Ireland with prepossessions against the people, their manners, and habits; and, in a later age, the practice acted as a great discouragement to learning. The Church, which in most other countries has its highest dignities open to men of learning and piety, however humble in their origin, has been generally closed in Ireland against all who are not recommended by family connexions, private friendship, or political services. The system of advancing Englishmen to Irish dignities was of course extremely obnoxious to the clergy of Ireland. They regarded it both as unfair and unjust. In the reign of King Henry III. an effort was made to resist the influx of these strange clergy. A violent decree was passed, that no man of the English nation should be admitted or received into a canonicate in any one of the Irish churches.¹ And in the year 1421, among certain articles exhibited against Richard O'Hedien, archbishop of Cashel, in a parliament held at Dublin, it was complained of him—"that he was kind to the Irish, and loved no Englishman, and that he neither himself gave, nor suffered any other bishop to give, a benefice to a native of England."² These bold efforts, however, were successfully opposed by the popes of Rome,

¹ Leland, i. p. 235.

² Ware's Bps. at Cashel.

who were in the habit of promoting both Englishmen and foreigners in the Irish Church.

While we lament the abuses to which this practice gave rise, it is but just, however, to remark (and we do so with thankfulness), that some of the greatest benefactors to the Church in Ireland were natives of England.¹ Indeed, these observations are chiefly made because it is most important that persons who are in the habit of looking upon the party-system that has so long obtained in the Irish Church as the natural result of certain religious changes in the sixteenth century, may be led to perceive, that although it has been more fully developed since that period, yet it took its rise at a time when the Irish Church was entirely under the influence of Rome.

John Cumin was an active and zealous bishop, whose exertions greatly improved the condition of the entire province under his administration. In the year 1186, he held a very important provincial synod in Dublin, which was numerously attended by his clergy. The synod met in the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin. If any reliance can be placed on the testimony of Giraldus Cambrensis (a Welsh priest who accompanied King John to Ireland, and wrote an exaggerated account of the evils of the country in that time), the proceedings of the synod were disgraced by the breaking-out of the mutual jealousies

¹ Especially since the 16th century. The names of Bramhall, Bedell, Marsh, &c. will suggest themselves at once to the reader.

that existed between the English and Irish clergy. On the first day of their meeting, the archbishop preached upon the sacraments. He was followed the next morning by Albin O'Mulloy, abbot of Balltinglass, and afterwards bishop of Ferns, who, in the course of his sermon, drew a comparison between the continence of the English and Irish clergy, of course most favourable to the character of the latter. He ascribed any irregularities that had crept in among them altogether to the influence and evil example of the clergy from England. This naturally aroused the indignation of the other party. A disgraceful scene ensued, in which the foreign clergy — as they were called — are represented as charging each other with gross incontinence, while the Irish stood by mocking and insulting them. One good, however, resulted from this confusion. As soon as the archbishop learned the truth of the charges advanced against his clergy, he immediately suspended from their offices in the Church those who were convicted of maintaining concubines. On the third day of the convention, Giraldus Cambrensis (or Gerald Barry, as he is otherwise called) delivered a discourse, in which he endeavoured to retaliate upon the former preacher, by bringing forward many equally grave charges against the clergy of Ireland. His most serious accusation is one of drunkenness. But if his admission be true, — that in other respects the native clergy spent a pure and chaste life, attending diligently to their Psalms and hours, and

practising due abstinence and frugality in their diet,¹ — his charge of drunkenness can scarcely be well founded ; at all events, it must be a great exaggeration of the facts.

Notwithstanding this confusion, the synod enacted many canons, whose principal object was to secure a more reverent celebration of the sacraments, and of other divine offices. According to the first of these canons, priests were prohibited from celebrating mass on a wooden table, as had hitherto been usual in Ireland.² In their place stone altars were to be erected in all monasteries and baptismal churches ; and where it was impossible that the entire altar should be made of stone, it was directed that a square and polished piece of stone be fixed in the midst of the altar, broad enough to contain five crosses and the largest chalice. It was next enacted, that the covering of the Holy Mysteries was to be spread over the whole upper part of the altar, which was itself to be covered by a cloth, whole and clean. Monasteries and rich churches were to be provided with gold and silver chalices : where these could not be afforded, clean pewter ones were deemed sufficient. The Host, which represents—says the synod —the Lamb without spot, the Alpha and Omega,

¹ Giraldus Camb. de Rebus, &c., p. 2, cap. xiv. quoted by Lanigan, iv. p. 267.

² This must be received with some limitation; for it is certain that there were numerous churches in Ireland, as ancient as the sixth and seventh centuries, which had stone altars.

was to be made so pure and white, that the partakers thereof may thereby understand the purifying and feeding of their souls rather than their bodies. The wine in the sacrament was to be so tempered with water as not to be deprived either of the natural taste or colour. All vestments and coverings belonging to the church were to be clean, white, and fine. A lavatory of stone or wood was to be erected in each church, and so contrived with a hollow, that whatever was poured into it should pass through and lodge in the earth. An immovable font was to be fixed in the middle of every baptismal church, or in such other part of it as the paschal procession might conveniently pass round. It was to be made of stone, or of wood lined with lead for cleanliness, wide and large above, bored through to the bottom, and so contrived, that after the ceremony of baptism was ended, a secret pipe might convey the consecrated element down to the earth. The coverings of the altar, and other vestments dedicated to God, when injured by age, were to be burnt within the enclosure of the church, and the ashes of them transmitted through the secret pipe of the font, to be buried in the ground.

Vessels that were used in baptism were never afterwards to be applied to the common uses of man. No person, under pain of an anathema, was to bury in a churchyard, unless he could prove, by some authentic document, or undeniable evidence, that it was consecrated by a bishop, not only as a sanctuary

or place of refuge, but likewise as a place of sepulture ; and no laymen should presume to bury their dead in any consecrated place without the presence of a priest. The divine offices were not to be celebrated in any private chapel built by laymen to the detriment of the parish church.

The thirteenth canon of this synod sets forth, that whereas the clergy of Ireland, among other virtues, have always been remarkable for their pure lives, and that it would be disgraceful if they should be corrupted by the contagion of strangers, and the evil example of a few incontinent men ; the archbishop therefore ordains, under the penalty of losing both office and benefice, that no priest, deacon, or sub-deacon, should keep any woman in his house, either under the pretence of necessary service, or any other colour whatsoever ; unless a mother, a sister, or one whose age should remove all suspicion of any unlawful commerce.

The synod then proceeds to condemn the crime of simony, the penalty of which was the loss of office and benefice. If any clergyman should accept an ecclesiastical benefice from a lay hand, unless after a third monition he renounce that possession, he was to be for ever deprived of the said benefice. A bishop was not to ordain the inhabitant of another diocese without the commendatory letters of his proper bishop or the archdeacon. And no one was to be promoted to holy orders without a certain title of a benefice assigned to him. Two holy orders

were not to be conferred on one person on the same day. All persons living in fornication should be compelled to celebrate a lawful marriage; nor should one born in fornication be promoted to holy orders, or be esteemed heir to either father or mother, unless his parents were afterwards united in lawful matrimony.

The next subject to engage the consideration of the synod was tithes. They were to be paid to the mother church out of provisions, hay, the young of animals, flax, wool, gardens, orchards, and out of all that grows and renews yearly, under pain of an anathema, after the third monition. Those who continued obstinately to refuse payment were to be compelled to pay more punctually for the future.

The synod ended its proceedings by enacting, that all archers and others, who carry arms for the sake of plunder and sordid lucre, and not for the defence of the people, should be excommunicated every Lord's day by bell, book, and candle, and, after their death, refused Christian burial.¹

Some would be disposed to condemn many of these canons as frivolous, and to censure the sacred synod for wasting its time in making enactments so unimportant in their nature. But such a condemnation would be in the highest degree unjust. Whatever were the faults of that age, a want of

¹ Harris and Ware, Bps. at Dublin. Harris copied these canons from a mutilated manuscript in the possession of the dean and chapter of Christ Church, Dublin.

reverence was not among the number. Every thing connected with the service of God, the smallest no less than the greatest, was considered to be sacred, and treated as such. Nothing that had any relation to the worship of God, or that tended to exhibit it with the grandeur and propriety befitting the Christian religion, was thought unimportant, and beneath the attention of the clergy. In the midst of many grave errors, it was at least a laudable aim to avoid a slovenly and careless celebration of the divine offices of religion; and in this respect the clergy of those times could teach the present age an useful lesson. They saw—what too many amongst us overlook—that if a nation is to be taught an habitual reverence for religion, its external ordinances are not to be treated with even an appearance of disrespect. All must be conducted with the utmost decorum and solemnity; and no means disregarded that may generate in the minds of the people an inward sense of its secret and true majesty.

As mention was made of simony in this and other synods of the times, it may be well to observe, that many acts were looked upon as a part of this crime, which the present age usually regards as innocent and lawful. The reader of general ecclesiastical history doubtless remembers the controversy respecting investiture, that, from the eleventh century, so greatly agitated Europe. It was the aim of the principal divines engaged in that dispute to eman-

cipate the Church from the domination and tyranny of the secular power, and to render the spiritual kingdom independent of civil control. They found the Church in a hapless state of degradation, illiterate and irreligious men pushed into the highest offices, and owing their elevation to the cupidity of the laity. Their efforts succeeded in introducing a better state of things, and in rescuing religion from the worst of all practical disorders ; but they erred in attempting to convert the Church into a temporal, as well as spiritual, kingdom, supported as much by the terrors of the civil sword as by the proper sanctions of religion. In a word, they fell into the mistake of framing a bond of union other than that which Divine Providence had ordained.

The Irish bishops, from the time of Malachy, were gradually imbibing such principles, which, after the invasion, were diffused more extensively by the English clergy promoted in Ireland. These had all been trained in the most exalted views of spiritual independence, which were rendered still more sacred to them by the death of St. Thomas Becket. They carried out their opinions in Ireland with the greater freedom, inasmuch as they were removed from the immediate inspection of the English government, while the provincial rulers were generally too weak to contend with the united strength of the Anglo-Irish ecclesiastics. There can, indeed, be no doubt that they pushed their views and measures to an extreme length ; yet so anomalous was the con-

dition of the Irish Church during these times—suspected by the native Irish themselves, and of course always liable to be injured by professing friends—that we are not perhaps sufficient judges of the necessity for what appears to be an over-strictness and excessive pretension. At least, since the fault of modern times is so much in an opposite direction, and since the crime of simony is so little a subject of practical apprehension at present, it is better for us to remain silent, and not to condemn.

The English invasion appears to have put a stop to a practice that prevailed in Ireland for a long time. Shortly after the arrival of the first invaders, a general synod of the Irish clergy was held at Armagh, “in which, after much deliberation concerning the arrival of the foreigners in Ireland, it was unanimously declared that this misfortune was a judgment of God on account of the sins of the people, and particularly because they used to buy English persons from merchants, robbers, and pirates, and reduce them to slavery; and hence it would appear that they, in their turn, were to be enslaved by the same nation. For the English people, during the integrity of their kingdom,¹ were, through a common vice of the nation, accustomed to expose their children for sale, and, even before they were in any want or distress, to sell their own sons and relatives to the Irish. It might therefore be probably supposed that the purchasers deserved the yoke of

¹ *i. e.* before the Norman conquest.

slavery, for this enormous crime, in the same manner as the sellers had been already treated (after the Norman conquest of England). It was consequently decreed, and unanimously ordered by the synod, that all the English throughout Ireland, who might happen to be in a state of slavery, should be restored to their original liberty."¹

The English made great alterations in the state of architecture in Ireland. The very ancient Irish churches were not distinguished by much of artistic grandeur. Some of them were built of wood, but in general they were small stone edifices, with a low narrow doorway, constructed in a square form, with large massive stones. Their usual size was sixty feet, and they rarely exceeded eighty: but there was one exception to this rule, the ancient cathedral of Armagh, which was one hundred and forty feet in length. Mr. Petrie has observed, that "these churches in their general form preserve very nearly that of the Roman basilica, and they are even called by this name in the oldest writers; but they never present the conched semicircular absis at the east end, which is so usual a feature in the Roman churches, and the smaller churches are only simple oblong quadrangles. In addition to this quadrangle, the

¹ I have here given Dr. Lanigan's translation of the original narrative, in Giraldus Camb. (*Hist. Exp.* l. i. cap. 13), which I have not at present by me. How far the custom prevailed amongst the English of exposing their children for sale, I am unable to say. Giraldus states the fact, but very probably exaggerates it, as he was usually in the habit of doing.

larger churches present a second oblong of smaller dimensions, extending to the east, and constituting the chancel or sanctuary, in which the altar was placed, and which is connected with the nave by a triumphal arch of semicircular form. These churches have rarely more than a single entrance, which is placed in the centre of the west end ; and they are very imperfectly lighted by small windows splaying inwards, which do not appear to have been ever glazed. The chancel is always better lighted than the nave, and usually has two, and sometimes three, windows, of which one is always placed in the centre of the east wall, and another in the south wall ; the windows in the nave are also usually placed in the south wall, and, excepting in the larger churches, rarely exceed two in number. The windows are frequently triangular-headed, but more usually arched semicircularly ; while the doorway, on the contrary, is almost universally covered by a horizontal lintel, consisting of a single stone. In all cases the sides of the doorways and windows incline, like the doorways in the oldest remains of Cyclopean buildings, to which they bear a singularly striking resemblance. The doorways seldom present any architectural decorations beyond a mere flat architrave, or band, but are most usually plain ; and the windows still more rarely exhibit ornaments of any kind. The walls of these churches are always perpendicular, and generally formed of very large polygonal stones,

carefully adjusted to each other, both on the inner and outer faces, while their interior is filled up with rubble and grouting. In the smaller churches the roofs were frequently formed of stone, but in the larger ones were always of wood, covered with shingle, straw, reeds, and perhaps sometimes with lead. It is remarkable that no churches appear to have been anciently erected in Ireland, either of the circular, the octagonal, or the cross form, although churches of the last form were erected in England at a very early period." Adjacent to many of these ancient churches are still to be seen those remarkable round towers, concerning the uses of which the learned were for a long time in doubt ; but Mr. Petrie has shewn satisfactorily that they were designed for belfries, and were occasionally used as keeps and watch-towers, into which the ecclesiastics could easily retire in times of danger and disturbance.

Although the ancient churches of Ireland in general were plain and without ornament, yet it must not be supposed that they were all devoid of architectural splendour ; on the contrary, it has been recently demonstrated, from the remains of the ancient churches at Glendaloch, Cashel, and elsewhere, that there existed in Ireland a beautiful and elaborate style of architecture, differing in many respects from the Norman style, and which can lay claim to a higher antiquity. There still remain many ancient churches and round towers, whose ornamental deco-

rations prove that the noble science of architecture was not unknown to our early forefathers.¹

But after the arrival of the English, the ancient Irish architecture gave place to that which is technically termed Gothic. Cathedrals and monasteries in the Gothic style sprang up throughout the land, and Irish and English lords vied with each other in munificent donations to the Church. John de Courcy, earl of Ulster, was one of the most liberal in his gifts. In the year 1177, he made an incursion into the northern parts of Ireland, and, with the assistance of twenty-two knights and three hundred soldiers, gained possession of ample territories in the county of Down. A large proportion of his acquired possessions he conferred upon the Church. In the year 1180, he founded the Abbey of Inis-Courcey,² upon the ruins, it is supposed, of a former monastery. It was erected for Cistercian monks, and to compensate for the Benedictine Abbey of Erynahagh,³ which he had destroyed in one of his battles. The monastery of Inis-Courcey was supplied with English monks from Furness, in Lanca-

¹ Mr. Petrie's "Essay on the Round Towers of Ireland," has been published after these pages were placed in the printer's hands. The perusal of Mr. Petrie's "Essay" will amply repay all who are interested in this subject. It is the result of many years patient labour and careful research.

² At Inch, in the county of Down.

³ In the barony of Lecale, county of Down. See Lanigan, iv. p. 249.

shire. In the same year he erected another Benedictine monastery, in the barony of the Ardes, in the same county. It was called the Black Priory of St. Andrew de Stokes. Africa, the wife of de Courcey, was the founder of the beautiful monastery of Grey Abbey, the ruins of which are still in a fine state of preservation. The Cistercian Abbey of Holy Cross, in Tipperary, perhaps the most splendid in Ireland, owed its erection to Donald O'Brian, king of North Munster. Even Dermod MacMur-chad, the traitorous prince of Leinster, distinguished himself by many monastic foundations in Dublin and in Ferns.

It had been well for the future prosperity of Ireland, had there been as great improvement in the social condition of the people as in the outward appearance of the Church. But, unhappily, this was not so. The English did much for the welfare of the country in many ways, and especially by the establishment of corporations, and the opening of a small trade in the towns in their own possession; but a good deal more could have been effected, had a sounder policy actuated the heads of their party. The circumstances attending the first arrival of the English were infelicitous. They settled in the country as adventurers, having obtained a certain proportion of land as the reward of services rendered to a native chieftain. Unwilling to sever themselves from connexion with their own country, they claimed the protection of the English laws, but did not think of

extending them to the Irish in such a form as might recommend them to their judgment, while not unnecessarily offending their cherished prejudices. The English laws afforded better protection to life and property than those of Ireland, and the Irish were themselves soon sensible of this. But there was also much in the political constitution of Ireland peculiarly suited to the requirements of the people. Had there arisen, then, any one great mind, who, perceiving this, would have attempted to unite the Irish and English races under a common constitution, composed alike of all that was beneficial in the Irish laws, and adapted to the wants of the people in the English—had the language of the country been encouraged, and not discountenanced—there would no doubt have been feuds and disorders for a time; but, in the end, many long ages of sorrow and confusion might have been prevented; the evils that afflicted Ireland before the twelfth century would in all likelihood have been corrected, and a basis of prosperity established more firm than it had ever known before.

No such comprehensive mind, however, arose; consequently the most impolitic course imaginable was pursued towards the natives. The admitted benefits of the English laws were dealt out with a most sparing hand even to the Irish tribes that submitted themselves to the crown of England. Sometimes they were altogether denied them. Of this an instance occurs in the reign of King Ed-

ward I., too remarkable to be passed by without notice. Some of the Irish clans, broken in spirits and in strength by repeated defeats, petitioned the lord-deputy to be admitted to the protection of the English law. They offered to pay a fine of 8000 marks for the benefits to be conceded them. King Edward was willing to grant the prayer of their petition, provided the general consent of the prelates and nobles of the land could be obtained to the measure. But this was not so easily secured. Two parliaments were summoned to take the petition into particular consideration. The proposal, however, was either totally rejected, or means were found to evade it, by those who wished to perpetuate the misery of these wretched people.¹

It was possible, however, for individuals to purchase the protection and benefits of English law by the payment of some heavy fine: but even this was earned at the sacrifice of many endeared prejudices. Native customs had to be renounced altogether—native ties of relationship severed—and the language of the country abjured. The experience to be learned

¹ See this stated more at large in Leland, i. p. 242, &c. Mr. Phelan, without any foundation whatever, asserts that the petition of the Irish clans was frustrated through the machinations of the bishops. He says, “The bishops defeated the good intentions of the king, and closed their ears to the groans of their countrymen.” (*Remains*, vol. ii. p. 86.) Such false and unjust charges must ever do the greatest injury to any cause, however righteous it may be in itself.

from history will surely teach us, that it is too much to expect from any people that they should unanimously give up all that every nation holds to be most dear. The Irish clung to their mother-tongue and the customs of their forefathers with stronger affection than to life itself; and, had a wise ruler undertaken to direct these feelings into a proper course, he might have employed that tenacious regard for their own institutions as the very means of effecting a sound reformation in their social state, and uniting them to Britain in the bonds of peace and prosperity. Would that the first settlers had reflected, that it is easier to overcome prejudices by indulgence than to conquer them by opposition!¹

This political blunder operated injuriously upon the interests of the Church. The same policy which shut out the “mere Irish” (as the natives were called) from the advantages of the English constitution, precluded them also from the protection of the Church. It was narrowed, and became in a great degree the Church of a party.² Suited as it was by its sacred

¹ Upon this whole subject, Mr. Phelan’s “Policy of the Church of Rome in Ireland” (chiefly the Introduction) might be read with advantage. The work contains some important remarks; but I would not have it understood that I agree with the view the writer takes of the conduct of the Romanised clergy in the twelfth and following centuries. He gives an exaggerated and unfair account of their political course, and the motives that actuated them, building his conclusions upon most insufficient authorities.

² See before, Chapter XII. p. 127.

character to compose the dissensions of the opposing factions, and to unite them all in one, the proper advantage was not taken of its inherent power. It was, unfortunately, arrayed against the people, instead of being employed to win them over to the side of peace and quiet. In general, the bishops and higher clergy were as much opposed to “the mere Irish” as the temporal power. Their voice was never raised against the policy which it suited the Anglo-Irish lords to pursue towards the weaker party. During the reign of King Edward III. many of the bishops attended a parliament held at Kilkenny, in the year 1367, in which the most unwise laws were enacted against the customs and natives of Ireland. Amongst others, it was decreed, that no marriages should be contracted between the English and Irish. If any of the English race should use an Irish name, or the Irish language, he was to be attainted and his goods forfeited. It was also ordained that the Irish should not be admitted into any cathedral or collegiate church, nor to a benefice of holy Church amongst the English of the land ; and that if such admission took place, the benefice was to be held void, and the presentation to revert to the king. It was likewise established, that no religious house, situate amongst the English, should henceforth receive Irishmen to their profession ; if any acted contrary to this injunction, they should be attainted, and their temporalities seized into the hands of the king, to remain at his pleasure ; and that no prelate of the Church

should receive any Irishman into holy orders without the assent and testimony of the king given to him under his seal.¹

In accordance with this policy, it became usual for the provincial synods to be held between the Anglo-Irish clergy alone; and in the acts of their proceedings, they were described as celebrated *inter Anglicos*, “between the English.” And as a further illustration of this same policy, it may be noticed that there was a regulation in St. Patrick’s Cathedral to this effect,—that no native Irishman should be admitted to any of its preferments; a regulation which, so late as the year 1515, was confirmed by Pope Leo X. in the following decisive terms: “Likewise it is agreed, that the custom anciently observed of not admitting the Irish by birth, manners, and blood, into the Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, prevail and always continue to be in force, any royal dispensation notwithstanding; and that upon this point inquiry be made with the utmost diligence, as well by the archbishop as by the dean and chapter.”²

It would not be necessary to say so much about a political system, the remnants of which are quickly dying away from amongst us, were not a clear acquaintance with this subject absolutely necessary in

¹ See the Statute of Kilkenny, edited for the Irish Archæological Society by Mr. Hardiman.

² See the Preface to the “Book of Obits of Christ Church,” p. xxxiv., note.

order to understand the peculiar religious difficulties that at the present day afflict Ireland and the Church. We find, that from the era of the English invasion there have existed two distinct races in the country, for a long period openly hostile to each other. It was (as we have seen) the policy of the dominant party to discountenance the Irish in every possible manner, to exclude them from all civil and ecclesiastical posts of trust, and to withhold from them the common blessings of civilisation. This policy was sanctioned by the court of Rome, so that the Irish Church of the twelfth century could not perhaps avoid being infected by it. The two ruling powers of the Irish Church were the King of England and the Bishop of Rome; and, by the united exertions of these potentates, it was for a long series of years made almost as much a part of the English Church as if it had no separate existence. But when the great revolution of the sixteenth century occurred, the interests of these two powers diverged, and the Church of the Pale adhered to the throne of England; while the court of Rome, together with those who were dissatisfied with the religious changes then made, were obliged to fall back upon the native Irish, whom, up to this time, all had agreed in repudiating and maltreating. The court of England, drawing the Church along with it, preserved still the old policy of the pale, instead of applying itself to rectify the great political blunders of the first invaders. But there can be little doubt that as

civilisation and good feeling, and the true principles of the Church, gained ground, these mistaken views would long since have yielded to a sounder policy, except for the intervention of unhappy political circumstances.¹

¹ The revolution of 1688 has injured the Irish Church in every possible manner; but in no respect more than by increasing that bitter political feeling between the two races which otherwise would undoubtedly have died away. The Orange principles, since so popular amongst a portion of the Church, have tended, more perhaps than any thing else, to perpetuate that unjust policy which has so long retarded the happiness of the Irish people. It is manifestly unfair to charge the injurious consequences of these principles upon the Church itself (as is sometimes done), because they do not properly belong to it. They are extraneous to it, and plainly subversive of its authority and influence.

CHAPTER XV.

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF RELIGION—LIBERALITY OF THE BISHOPS—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AN UNIVERSITY—RICHARD FITZ-RALPH—ABUSE OF EXCOMMUNICATION—INDULGENCES—TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPES—CONCLUSION.

THE declension of religion, so much the characteristic of the Irish Church in the twelfth century and following ages, is not altogether to be attributed to the English invasion. The semi-barbarism of the preceding period, the rude habits of the Irish chieftains, the injuries suffered by the Church from the Danish wars, the corruption of religion—all these causes contributed to the decay of ancient fervour and piety. The wars of the English undoubtedly increased the evil; but especially the impolitic course adopted towards the Irish natives; which, excluding them from the advantages of civilisation, drove them to live as best they could, amid the wilds and woods of their country. In fact, every cause conspired to bring about a state of things almost too painful for contemplation; in which the people became the most miserable and wretched that perhaps was to be found in any part of Europe. Still, however, there were bright lights in the midst of this dark firmament. Among the

clergy especially, there arose, as we shall see, here and there, men serving God to the best of their ability, and shedding a lustre over their age by the learning that distinguished them. In one view, the bishops of these times particularly deserve our respect. The wealth which they derived from their sees they did not usually expend on themselves or their relatives ; but looked upon it as the property of the Church, entrusted to their guardianship for its use. Of course there were some who were guided by a very different rule ; mean, irreligious men, who ground their clergy hard, using every method to extort money, in order to bestow it on unworthy objects. But such persons formed the exception, rather than the rule. In the bishops, in general, the poor found their best and often (excepting the monks) their only benefactors ; they alone attempted to revive learning ; and it is principally to their munificence and liberality that the existing cathedrals and ancient churches of Ireland are indebted for their preservation to the present time.

Of the liberality of the bishops in these respects abundant proof is to be found in the annals of the three following centuries, and it may not be un-instructive to lay a few examples before the reader.

The cathedral of Limerick received many benefactions from Hubert de Burgo, who was appointed bishop of that see in the year 1223. It was also repaired and beautified at great expense by Eustachius del Ewe, who was promoted from the deanery

of Limerick to the bishopric of the same see in the year 1311.

Of Thomas Cranely, archbishop of Dublin in the year 1398, it is recorded that “he was a very bountiful man, and full of alms-deeds, a profound clerk and doctor of divinity, an extraordinary fine preacher, and a great builder and improver of places under his care.” It is, in like manner, said of John O’Grady, archbishop of Cashel in 1345, that he was “a man of sound discretion and industry, and endowed his church with numerous gifts.”

In the diocese of Ossory, Hugh Mapilton (who was advanced to that bishopric in the year 1251) is recorded to have builded an episcopal residence for himself and his successors, and was engaged in making additions to the cathedral of St. Canice, at Kilkenny, when he was overtaken by death. This see owed much to the munificence of its prelates: Geoffrey St. Leger, its bishop in 1260, completed the buildings which his predecessor Mapilton had left unfinished. He was also a benefactor to the vicars choral, who were founded by him. Michael, a native of Exeter, and bishop of Ossory in 1289, “is much commended,” says the chronicler, “for his liberality to the canons of his church.” “And another Englishman named John of Tatenale, or by some called John of Oxford, who was raised to this see in 1370, is said to have released to the vicars choral all procurations due to the see, by right of ordinary visitation, except only a yearly

payment of six shillings and eightpence, with this condition, that under the penalty of ten shillings for omission, they should celebrate the anniversary of his death."

These examples might be greatly multiplied from the annals of almost every bishopric in Ireland.¹ There are those, indeed, who would look upon any such appropriations of wealth as a misapplication of God's gifts; but the reign of so cold and calculating a spirit, we trust, is nearly at its end, and the time arrived, when the effort to provide for the worship of God in a manner least unworthy of His holy name shall be esteemed a privilege, no less than a duty. At all events, it is impossible to give a fair picture of the Church, during the thirteenth and following centuries, without taking so remarkable a feature into consideration; whatever else were the faults of the bishops in those ages, this liberal care of their diocesan churches must hold a place among their better qualities; and if, in determining the religious character of those times, we refuse to allow

¹ It may not be uninteresting to notice here, that, during the episcopate of John Folan, about the year 1489, the citizens of Limerick are recorded to have repaired the body of their cathedral, which was going to decay. In like manner, a fire having destroyed a part of Dublin in the year 1283, and having injured, among other buildings, the cathedral of Christ Church, "the citizens of Dublin, before they went about to repair their own private houses, agreed together to make a collection for repairing the ruins of that ancient church." See Ware's *Annals*, ad An.

this public spirit—for so it may be called—its just and proper weight, our decision must necessarily be one-sided and unfair.

But this liberality was not entirely restricted to the episcopal order. Many of the other dignified clergy are recorded as benefactors to the cathedral canons, the monastic houses, and the poor. In particular, it deserves to be mentioned in this place, that John Aleyn, dean of St. Patrick's, who died in the year 1505,¹ before his death founded an hospital in St. Kevin's Street, Dublin, for sick and poor people, to be chosen principally from families bearing his own and some other surnames specified in the deed of foundation, to whom he assigned lands for their maintenance. A site for the erection of the hospital was granted by Walter Fitz-Symons, archbishop of Dublin. It is, however, worthy of observation, that, by the will of the founder, the benefits of this hospital were confined to members of the *English nation*.²

It could not be expected that the cause of literature should find much patronage in a country plunged as Ireland then was into all the distractions of civil warfare. The times were infelicitous, and the clergy were too much exposed to annoyance from the never-ceasing feuds between the English and Irish, to allow them to walk in the quiet paths of learning, even if they had desired to do so. Yet

¹ Ware's Annals in An.

² Book of Obits, Pref. p. xxxiv., note.

we read occasionally of bishops and others “renowned for their learning;” and laudable exertions were made on more than one occasion to prevent the dying embers of literature from becoming totally extinguished.

The first effort to establish an university in Ireland was made by John Lech, an Englishman, who was advanced to the see of Dublin by King Edward II., in the year 1310. He procured in 1313, from Pope Clement V., a bull for the foundation of an university of scholars at Dublin; but he had not time to carry his plans into operation, his death occurring in the August of the same year. Alexander de Bicknor, his successor in the archbishopric, renewed the foundation. He connected the university with St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and procured a confirmation of it from Pope John XXII. Its first chancellor was William Rodiart, dean of St. Patrick’s, who was made a doctor of the canon law at the same time that the degree of doctor in divinity was conferred upon three others. A divinity lectureship was established in it by King Edward III.; but, unfortunately, all the chroniclers agree in asserting, that “the maintenance of scholars failing, the university by degrees came to nothing.” The failure of this scheme for the education of the country would appear to have arisen from some other causes than the apathy of the clerical body; for in a provincial synod held at Christ Church during the reign of Henry VII., before Walter Fitz-Symons,

archbishop of Dublin, all the bishops and clergy of the province of Dublin consented to tax themselves for its support, and to pay certain stipends towards the maintenance of *the readers* of the university.

The parliament held at Drogheda, in the year 1465, made a further attempt to establish an university in Ireland. In the statute of foundation it set forth, that "at the request of the Commons, because there is no university nor general study in Ireland, which is a work that would advance knowledge, riches, and good government, and also prevent riot, ill government, and extortion in the said land, it is ordained, established, and granted, by the authority of the said parliament, that there be an university in the town of Drogheda, wherein there may be made bachelors, masters, and doctors in every science and faculty, in like manner as they are in the University of Oxford; which may also have, occupy, and enjoy all manner of liberties, privileges, &c. that the said University of Oxford doth occupy and enjoy." All these provisions were excellent, so far as they went; but the parliament strangely omitted to supply means either for the erection of the university, or the support of the scholars. The natural consequence of so important an omission was the failure of a scheme that otherwise might have proved successful. For we learn from various sources that there was no lack of scholars ready to avail themselves of the means of education; on the contrary, there is evidence to prove that many

sought in England the instruction they had no opportunity of acquiring at home; and that, too, at a period when numerous difficulties and impediments obstructed the intercourse between the people of the two countries. In a parliament held in the reign of Henry IV., A.D. 1410, it was enacted that every one desirous of visiting England or any other country, *to learn the laws of the Church of this land* (*i. e.* Ireland), should in the first instance come before the chancellor and apply for leave of absence from him.¹ And another parliament, held in the year 1475, allowed the sum of six marks yearly, from the tithes of a parish near Dublin, to be appropriated to the use of one James Maddock, who was studying at the University of Oxford,²—the grant to be continued “until the said James should be promoted to a competent benefice.” The reason assigned in the act for sanctioning the grant is both curious and important—“*forasmuch as there are but few in this land who are able to teach or preach the word of God.*”

But we must not omit honourable mention of perhaps the most distinguished of the very few learned divines of whom Ireland could boast from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Richard Fitz-

¹ See the Statute of Kilkenny, edited by Mr. Hardiman, p. 129.

² The tithes of the parish had been voluntarily resigned by the incumbent for this purpose; and the parliament was asked to sanction the proceeding. See the act in the Appendix.

Ralph, according to the best accounts, was a native of Dundalk, in the county of Louth ; but received his education in England, where he became Chancellor (or Vice-Chancellor) of the University of Oxford in the year 1333, and was afterwards made Dean of Lichfield. Pope Clement VI. advanced him to the see of Armagh, to which he was consecrated in 1347, by John de Grandison, bishop of Exeter, assisted by three other English prelates. He was a learned and assiduous preacher, and has left among his writings a volume of sermons, preached partly in his own diocese, and partly in England and elsewhere. Anxious to improve the education of his clergy, he is said to have sent three or four of them into England, to study theology at Oxford. A foolish story is told of their having returned back into Ireland *because they could not find a Bible for sale at the University.*¹ As if this sacred volume could possibly be so rare in a place where numbers must have spent the greater part of their time in making transcripts of portions of it.

Richard Fitz-Ralph had the misfortune to engage in an angry controversy with the Dominicans and Franciscans, who came into Ireland shortly after the original institution of their respective orders. They soon spread over the whole country, and became in a short time so popular as to gain possession of numerous abbeys and churches, to which the people

¹ Lewis's History of Translations of the Bible, quoted in the Bp. of Down's History of Ireland, p. 37.

(as in other parts of Europe) resorted, in preference to their parish-churches. In fact, the mendicant orders in Ireland, as well as elsewhere, weakened in a considerable degree the influence of the secular clergy with the people, and deprived them of their congregations : so that it is no matter of surprise to find the secular priests almost unanimous in their dislike of these popular intruders.

The fundamental rule of all the mendicant orders¹ was the same, namely, that of absolute poverty. They were to act strictly upon the most literal construction of those words of our blessed Lord : “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves : for the workman is worthy of his hire.”² Accordingly, it was the original intention of their founders that the members of their respective orders should live upon the alms of the people, or *beg* in the different cities and villages through which they passed. Yet this intention was before long departed from ; and by a forced interpretation of their rules, the mendicant orders were allowed to become possessed of as much wealth and

¹ There were four monastic orders who made profession of absolute poverty and of mendicancy : the Dominicans, or *preaching friars*, founded by St. Dominic ; the Franciscans, or *Minorites*, whose founder was St. Francis ; the Carmelites, an order transplanted into the Western Church from Palestine ; and the Augustinian Eremites, established by Pope Alexander IV.

² St. Matt. x. 9, 10.

property as any of the other monastic establishments.

Richard Fitz-Ralph opposed the obligation to poverty, by the pretence of which these begging friars had succeeded in gaining the popular sympathy. In a series of sermons, preached at St. Paul's Cross in London, he maintained amongst others, the following conclusions: that our blessed Lord, although poor on earth, yet loved not poverty for its own sake: that He Himself neither begged nor taught others to do so, but, on the contrary, directed them not to beg: that no man can, either with prudence or piety, bind himself to a vow of perpetual poverty; and that those who come to confession should prefer the parish-church to the friar's oratory, and the parish-priest to the mendicant friar.

The boldness with which he advanced opinions so much opposed to their own interests, aroused the indignation both of the Dominicans and Franciscans, who procured him to be summoned to Avignon, where the Roman pontiff then resided. Fitz-Ralph obeyed the summons, and defended his views manfully before the pope and Roman court. He was detained in France for three years, and died there before the termination of his suit. His death occurred on the 14th of November, 1360. His remains were subsequently removed to Ireland, and deposited in the church of Dundalk.¹

¹ See Ware's Bishops at Armagh, and Irish Writers.

Notwithstanding the energy, learning, and boldness that characterised Fitz-Ralph, and some others of the Irish clergy, corruptions were continually gaining ground. Among these, none is so much to be deplored as the fearful abuse of the powers of excommunication. Sometimes for political purposes, sometimes to avenge private wrongs, the bishops did not hesitate to misapply the authority committed to them for the edification of the Church; and by a reckless abuse of ecclesiastical censures, in the end brought this sacred part of Christian discipline into disrepute and contempt among the laity. The obnoxious "Statute of Kilkenny," passed in the year 1367, and so full of unjust enactments against the native Irish,¹ was not only ratified by the secular authority of the lords spiritual and temporal, but was also doubly confirmed by the solemn promulgation of an anathema against the unfortunate people, who could scarcely be expected to submit to its provisions. Dr. Leland likewise informs us, that in all the indentures of the Irish, executed on their submission to the chief governor, there is an express provision, that in case of any violation of their compact, they will submit to the excommunication of the Church. The Irish bishops, continues the same writer, situated at a distance from the seat of government, were not always ready to denounce this formidable sentence against their countrymen. To force their compliance with the

¹ See before, Chap. XIV. p. 154.

directions of the civil power, Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, lord deputy of Ireland in the reign of Edward IV., convened a parliament at Dublin in the year 1467, at which he procured the following ordinance to be enacted :

“ Whereas, our holy Adrian, pope of Rome, was seised of all the seignory of Ireland in right of his Church ; and whereas, for a certain rent, he alienated the said seignory to the king of England and his heirs for ever, by which grant the subjects of Ireland owe their obedience to the king of England as their sovereign lord ; it is therefore ordained that all archbishops and bishops of Ireland shall, upon the monition of forty days, proceed to the excommunication of all disobedient subjects ; and if such archbishops or bishops be remiss in doing their duties in the premises, they shall forfeit one hundred pounds.”¹ Thus the spiritual powers of the Church were degraded almost to the level of a civil penalty for violating an act of parliament ! Nothing can more clearly shew the evil consequences of the sort of connexion then subsisting between the Irish Church and Rome. In the very worst times of state-control over the ecclesiastical body, no such unlawful demand has been ever made upon the Church’s rulers ; nor could such an act have been passed, even at that period, if the Irish lord deputy had not felt assured that he could de-

¹ See Leland, vol. ii. p. 56. This act is printed in full in Mr. Hardiman’s “ Statute of Kilkenny,” p. 3, note.

pend on the co-operation of the papal court. It was because Ireland was a fief of the holy see that he called upon the bishops to affright the enemies of the civil power by the terrors of their spiritual sword.

One of the most remarkable instances of abuse of this spiritual power occurred in the reign of King Edward III. It was agreed in a parliament held at Kilkenny in the year 1346, to grant a certain subsidy for the support of the Anglo-Irish forces. This grant (which extended to ecclesiastical persons and the tenants of ecclesiastical lands) was not agreeable to Ralph Kelly, archbishop of Cashel, who resolved to oppose it by every means in his power. Accordingly, he summoned his suffragans of Limerick, Emly, and Lismore, and, with their concurrence, issued an ordinance that all beneficed clergymen who should presume to pay their allotted portion of this subsidy, were to be immediately deprived of their benefices, and rendered incapable of holding any ecclesiastical preferment within the province; and that all lay tenants on the ecclesiastical lands who should comply with the requisition of parliament, were to be excommunicated, and their children disqualified from enjoying any ecclesiastical benefice, even to the third generation. Nor did this edict satisfy the archbishop. He repaired to the town of Clonmel, and there publicly and solemnly denounced the sentence of excommunication upon all those who paid, imposed, procured, or in any manner contri-

buted to the exacting of this subsidy from any of the persons or lands belonging to his church; and on William Epworth, by name, the king's commissioner in the county of Tipperary, for receiving it from the several collectors. An information was exhibited against the prelate for this offence. He denied the charge; he pleaded, that by the great charter granted by the crown to England and Ireland, it was provided that the Church in both countries should be free; that by the same charter it was ordained, that those who infringed the immunities of the Church should be *ipso facto* excommunicated; and that he had but exercised his spiritual power against such as had violated the king's peace, or levied money on the subject without his knowledge and assent. Both the archbishop and his suffragans, however, were found guilty; but though they repeatedly refused to appear in arrest of judgment, they seem to have been too powerful, and their cause too popular, for the offence to receive its due punishment. This appears to have been a case of wanton opposition to the civil authorities, in which the sacred powers of the Church were employed to encourage resistance to a lawful demand, and to embarrass the government of the country.

It was likewise usual with the bishops to revenge the plunder of ecclesiastical property, or the invasion of any of the rights of the Church, by denouncing an anathema against the offenders. Without

doubt, such persons deserved to be punished ; and if the bishops did not act with vigour and severity, the Church would have been exposed to their continual assaults. Yet it is to be feared that the slightest provocation was sufficient to call down the extreme censures of religion ; and one cannot but regret, that in cases affecting only the temporalities of the Church, some other mode of punishment was not devised. At least, it would have been better to suffer the loss of earthly goods, and to leave the plunderer to the judgment of Another Tribunal, than, by the constant use of the awful power of excommunication, to run the risk of bringing it into contempt, and teaching men not to fear it. It is the misfortune of the present age that the powers and discipline of the Church are suffered to remain (as it were) in abeyance : who will say that this is not a judgment upon us for the reckless manner in which they were formerly abused and weakened ?

But the penitential discipline of the Church received another injury from the course that was pursued with respect to *indulgences*. In the primitive ages every bishop had power to shorten the term of penance imposed on any sinner, if he perceived his repentance to be genuine and sincere. This was called an indulgence ; and it was absolutely necessary for the bishop to possess such a discretionary power, since the course of penitential discipline in the Church used then to extend over many years. In an after-period, it became a very common cus-

tom to grant these indulgences upon the slightest occasion : if the popes were in want of money, or if a bishop wished to build a church, or repair an altar, or enrich an abbey. Thus a method was invented of evading the last remnants of the ancient Catholic discipline. The nature of an indulgence was changed. It was no longer the remission of penance, in consequence of the sincere and assured repentance of the penitent ; but it was a bribe held out to every sinner, promising him a false pardon upon the easiest terms. Nor was it only for the purpose of satisfying the consciences of those who continued in sin, yet feared its consequences, that indulgences were used. They were too often prostituted to the purposes of private revenge ; and the discipline of the Church became, in unworthy hands, an engine of oppression and a weapon of tyranny ; for example, in 1442, we read, that John Prene, archbishop of Armagh, being highly incensed against the dean and chapter of Raphoe, and having deprived them of their benefices, granted, moreover, forty days' indulgence to all who should fall upon their persons, and seize or dissipate their substance.¹

¹ M. Fleury notices the same abuse as prevalent in other parts of the Church. “ It is true (he says) that the number of indulgences, and the facility of obtaining them, was a great obstacle to the zeal of the most enlightened confessors. It was difficult to persuade a sinner to make use of fasts and discipline when he could buy them off by a slight alms, or a visit to a church. For the bishops of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries granted indulgences to the performance of all sorts

The Roman bishops uniformly manifested a bitter spirit of hostility against the Irish Church and people. The bull of Pope Adrian commissioned King Henry II. "to teach the truth of the Christian faith to the ignorant and rude," meaning the Irish clergy and people, "to exterminate the roots of vice from the field of the Lord," "to reduce the people to obedience unto laws," "to restrain the progress of vice, correct manners, plant virtue, and increase religion." The rescript of Alexander III. speaks in the harshest language, of "the filthiness of that land," and terms the Irish people "a barbarous nation enrolled under a Christian name, destitute of good morals, and whose Church was totally disorganised." The same feeling existed in the breasts of all the subsequent Roman pontiffs; who manifested it by taking part against the Irish upon every occasion, and by never making the smallest exertion for the alleviation of their misery. Had the popes so willed, it would not have been difficult for them to have improved the state of Ireland, and rendered the condition of the

of pious works—such as the building of a church, the keeping in repair an hospital; indeed, any public work—such as a bridge, a footpath, a public road. These indulgences, in truth, were but a part of penance; but if men joined several together, they might buy it off altogether. It is such indulgences that the fourth Lateran council calls indiscreet and superfluous, which render the keys of the Church despicable, and weaken the satisfaction of penance."—*Quatrième Discours sur l'Histoire Ecclésiastique.*

people more happy and contented. But they never raised a voice either to advise the adoption of a milder policy, or to remonstrate with those who maltreated them. And for this they are altogether without excuse; inasmuch as the bishops of Rome claimed to be the temporal sovereigns of the country. Ireland was their inheritance—so they said—but it was one concerning whose welfare and happiness they appear to have had no care.

In a former chapter¹ it was stated that the popes not only encouraged the appointment of Englishmen to the ecclesiastical benefices, but also themselves occasionally promoted foreigners. “Attempts were made,” writes Dr. Leland, “to overspread the kingdom with Italian ecclesiastics. The boldest remonstrances were made to the king against this scandalous abuse of investing proud and luxurious foreigners with the dignities and revenues of the Irish Church, who contemptuously refused to engage in the duties of their function, or to reside in the country which they pillaged by their extortions. The complaint appeared so just and urgent, that the king (Henry III.) was obliged to interpose his authority, and by letter to his chief governor, directed that the pope’s agents should not only be prevented from extorting money from the ecclesiastics, but from making such shameful dispositions of their benefices.”²

Another attempt was made to circumscribe the

¹ XIV. p. 139.

² Leland, vol. i. p. 233.

power of the popes in the year 1475. While William Sherwood, bishop of Meath, was lord deputy of Ireland, he held a parliament in Dublin, at which it was declared high treason to bring bulls or rescripts from Rome. And the acts of this assembly were never repealed. It may here also be mentioned, as an illustration of the Anglo-Irish policy, that this same parliament gave permission to any of the English who suffered loss from an Irishman not amenable to the law, to take reprisals for the injury upon the whole sept or nation.¹

Such was the political and religious condition of Ireland during all this period. It was truly deserving of commiseration. The natives of the same land, who were intended to live together in peace and quietness, were divided into two opposing parties, entertaining for each other the deepest enmity, and always plunged in civil warfare. These dissensions were carried even into matters of religion. The Church was not the home of all the people; for a large section were excluded from the shelter of its monastic houses and from its pastoral employments, except at a sacrifice too dear to be generally made.

We have thus endeavoured shortly to describe the state into which the Irish Church had gradually fallen. It is painful to mark the progress of decay; and in this instance the pain is increased by the contrast between these dark days of secularity and the holy zeal of other times. The nursery of so

¹ Ware's Annals in An.

many missionaries saw her own children (in a manner) abandoned by those who should have been their guides. The seat of so many schools, once the resort of other nations, had no university in which to train up her own youth. In the very neighbourhood of those monasteries, so remarkable for ascetic piety, the indiscreet use of ecclesiastical censures was making discipline nothing but an empty name; and few in the land of St. Patrick and St. Colum-cille “were able to teach or preach the word of God.”

Such were the miserable effects of abusing spiritual influence to secular objects. From the day that spiritual weapons were employed for the purpose of abetting political schemes, and the catholic spirit of the Church narrowed to party-purposes, evils took their rise which have not yet come to a termination. The unhappy divisions which have existed so long—the estrangement of those who should have knelt before a common Altar—may in a measure be regarded as the result of this unhal-lowed policy. Alas! the seed has borne its fruit only too abundantly; and what will the end be? Let us not grow faint in earnest prayer and fasting, in humiliation for our sins and the sins of our fore-fathers, and it may yet please God to satisfy the yearnings of so many hearts, and to make us once again even as “a city that is at unity with itself.”

APPENDIX.

No. I.

COLGAN, in his *Trias Thaumaturga* (Lovan. 1647), has published seven tracts on the life of St. Patrick. The first is an ancient metrical life, written in the Irish language, and ascribed to Fiech, bishop of Sletty, and one of Patrick's earliest disciples. There is internal evidence, however, to make us doubt that Fiech is its author, although unquestionably it is of great antiquity. The three next accounts, which he terms vita 2da, vita 3tia, vita 4ta, are not of very great value, though probably translations from the Irish. Vita 5ta, supposed to have been written by Probus, a monk of the tenth century, is much valued by Dr. Lanigan. Vita 6ta is Jocelyn's life of the saint. It was drawn up in the 12th century, according to Colgan in the year 1185; and although valuable on account of many topographical allusions, contains nevertheless a monstrous collection of legendary fables. Vita 7ta—to which Colgan gives the name of "Tripartita," because it is divided into three parts—is in many respects an important work, although disfigured, like Jocelyn's, by fabulous stories. The Tripartite was originally written partly in Irish, and partly in Latin, but is published by Colgan altogether in the Latin tongue. The authorship of at least a portion of it is attributed to St. Evin, who lived in the sixth century.

Besides the lives of St. Patrick published by Colgan, a few others are extant in ms. There is a very ancient one, written in the Irish language, in the *Leabhar Breac*; and another, in the same tongue, in the Book of Lismore: both mss. of some antiquity, in the library of the Royal Irish Academy. They are not entirely the same, though drawn from the same source, but differ more or less in matters of local detail. The “life” preserved in the *Leabhar Breac* is the more ancient and the more valuable of the two. Tirechan’s “Annotations on the Life of St. Patrick,” a Latin tract in Irish characters, is extant in the Book of Armagh, a valuable ms. of the seventh century, in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Brownlow of Dublin. Sir William Betham has published the text of Tirechan, with a translation, in his “Irish Antiquarian Researches.”

No. II.

As it is generally believed that St. Patrick was ordained a bishop by Pope Celestine, I think it desirable to state the authority on which I have founded my assertion in pages 8, 9, that he was consecrated by a Gallican prelate. Jocelyn’s Life of St. Patrick, and the Tripartite, are the principal authorities for the more common opinion; but the other is far better supported. Colgan’s Vita 2da, Vita 3ta, Vita 4ta, and Vita 5ta, relate that Patrick was consecrated by a bishop named Amator, or Amathorex. The scholiast on the Life by Fiech (n. 14, p. 5) says that this Amator was bishop of Auxerre: but both Ussher and Colgan object, that if Patrick were consecrated by him, he would have been a bishop

before his own master, St. Germain, which was not probable. However, the agreement of these four tracts and the scholiast on Fiech, in the opinion that he was raised to the episcopal order by a Gallican bishop, forms a strong presumption in favour of its correctness. And this amounts almost to certainty when the testimony of the ancient life in the *Leabhar Breac* is taken into consideration. This tract, without mentioning any name, states that “Patrick then set out for the successor of Peter. He went to a noble person on the way, who conferred the dignity of bishop on him.” It is this testimony that I have followed. Dr. Lanigan (vol. i. p. 198) is also of opinion that he was consecrated by a bishop of Gaul. However, the ms. life of St. Patrick in the Book of Lismore agrees with Jocelyn and the Tripartite; and hence it is probable their statement has been taken. The “life” in the Book of Lismore relates that “Patrick then went to Rome, from Germanus, and received the dignity of bishop from the successor of Peter, Celestinus, who sent him into Ireland.”

No. III.

“Here he resolved to pass the night, and accordingly his companions lighted a fire, most probably to prepare their food.”—Pp. 11, 12.

The published lives of St. Patrick notice this fire as a “paschal, or divine, or sacred fire,” forming a part of the ceremonies of Easter-eve. But was there any ceremony in the Church, of which lighting “a sacred fire” formed a part? Perhaps there was some reference to the eastern practice of burning torches or candles upon the

paschal eve. According to Bingham (vol. vii. p. 234), “Eusebius says—‘In the time of Constantine, this vigil was kept with great pomp : for he set up lofty pillars of wax, to burn as torches, all over the city, and lamps burning in all places, so that the night seemed to out-shine the sun at noonday.’ Nazianzen also speaks of this custom of setting up lamps and torches both in the churches and their own private houses ; which he says they did as a *prodromus*, or ‘forerunner,’ of that great light, the Sun of righteousness, arising on the world on Easter-day.”

Although it is not impossible that St. Patrick may have introduced some such custom as this, yet I am inclined to believe that the fire he is said to have ignited on Easter-eve had no connexion whatever with any religious ceremony. It is probable that the phrase “ignis paschalis” originated in some confused translation of the following Irish version of the circumstance as recorded in the Life of St. Patrick preserved in the *Leabhar Breac*.

“Then Patrick,” says the writer in this MS., “came to Ferta-fir-feic. *They kindled a fire at that place on the paschal eve.* Leoghaire became angry when he saw the fire, because that was the privilege of Tara, with the Godelians (Gaels), and no person dare light a fire in Ireland upon that day, until a fire was first kindled on Tara at this festival or solemnity. And the Druids said, ‘If that fire be not extinguished this night, unto him whose fire it shall be shall belong the sovereignty of Ireland for ever.’”

No. IV.

The following extract from the *Antiquitates Americanæ* (*Hafniæ*, 1837), p. 203, contains, I believe, all that is known respecting the Irish missionaries to Iceland :—

“*From the History of Olave, son of Tryggvius.*

“But before Iceland was visited by Norwegians, there were men there whom the Northmen call Popes (papas, priests). These were Christians ; for Irish books, bells, and staffs (*litui*, forsⁿan croziers), which they had left behind them, were found, and many other things, from which it was evident that they were Christians, and had come through the ocean from the west. Anglican books also agree that about that time navigation increased between these lands.

“Dicuill, an Irish monk, calls Iceland an uncultivated island, and relates that certain clerks, thirty years before (consequently in the year 795), told him that they had sojourned on this island from the kalends of February to the kalends of August. The same Dicuill bears witness that Irish clergy, a hundred years before, to wit 725, visited many islands situated in the north of the British ocean, which could be reached from the northern islands of Britain, by a direct navigation of two days and nights, with full sails and a favourable wind ; that these islands, uninhabited from the beginning of the world, were at that time (825) abandoned by the anchorites, on account of the Northmen pirates ; that the same were filled with innumerable sheep, and many different kinds of the largest birds. By which description undoubtedly the

Ferro Isles are indicated, whose name is derived from those very sheep."

No. V.

Allusion was made (chap. ix. p. 87) to the practice that once existed in Ireland by which the clergy were obliged to attend their chieftains on the field of battle. The following extract from "the Annals of the four Masters" (for which I am indebted to Mr. Curry) contains an account of the way by which the clergy obtained at length an exemption from this service :—

"Anno 799. Hugh Oirdnighe collected a very large force to go into Leinster, and he ravaged Leinster twice in one month. He again collected all the men of Ireland (the Lagenians excepted), both laymen and ecclesiastics, and marched until he reached Dan-Cuar, on the confines of Meath and Leinster. There came there Connmach Coarb of St. Patrick (primate of Armagh), with the clergy of Leith Cuinn (*i. e.* Conn's half, or the northern half of Ireland), along with him. The clergy did not, however, like to be called on any such expeditions, and they complained of their hardships to the king. The king answered that he would abide by the judgment or decision of Fothadh-na-Canoine; so that it was then Fothadh who gave the judgment by which the clergy of Ireland were freed from [joining in] excursions and expeditions for ever, when he said :

The Church of the living God,
Touch her not, nor waste;
Let her rights be inviolate,
As best they ever were.

Every true monk who is
Possessed of a pure conscience,
To the church to which it is due,
Let him do as any servant.
Every reprobate from henceforth,
Who submits not to rule and obedience,
Has liberty to join in the battles
Of Hugh the Great, the son of Niall."

Fothadh, who delivered this judgment, was a learned lecturer of Armagh, celebrated for his acquaintance with the canons; and hence called Fothadh-na-Canoine, or Fothadh of the Canons. He accompanied Connmach, the archbishop, to the battle; and, on account of his pre-eminent learning, was selected by the king to determine the matter—one of the many proofs of the estimation in which such persons were held by the native chieftains, even during the confusions of the Danish wars.

No. VI.

Dr. Lanigan, Mr. Moore, and most modern Romanist writers on Irish history, maintain that the introduction of tithes into Ireland was a consequence of the English invasion. They admit that a canon was passed respecting them at the Synod of Kells in 1152, but assert that they are not enforced until the Synod of Cashel in 1172, and that they were altogether unknown to the Irish church in earlier times. (See Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 80, 218, &c.) In making this assertion, however, Dr. Lanigan (from whom others have borrowed it) altogether overlooked several canons regulating the payment of tithes, of great antiquity, and ascribed to the Irish Church on the same grounds as many others that

he most readily receives. I apprehend that “in the Brehon Laws” (the statute-law of the ancient Irish) many stringent enactments are to be found on this subject; and from the same laws it will be seen that not only was the tenth of the fruits of the earth to be offered to God, but (what is still more remarkable) the tenth member of each family was required to be dedicated to the service of religion. When, one may ask, is this ancient code of the Irish to be published? If indeed “the laws of a nation form the most instructive portion of its history, the history of Ireland,” Mr. Hardiman observes, “in this respect presents a blank: for the laws of this ‘ancient nation,’ though sufficiently voluminous, do not form any portion of its published history. Although the Irish, from the very beginning of time, had been governed and regulated by the code celebrated under the name of ‘the Brehon Law,’ yet the particulars of that code are as little known at the present day as if it had never existed.” “The Brehon laws are known only by name. Their contents remain undisclosed, for the only attempts hitherto made to develop them were those of Vallancey, in his *Collectanea*, vol. i.; and they are scarcely deserving of notice. The originals are scattered through various libraries and repositories in Ireland, England, and the Continent of Europe; but the greatest portion is supposed to be preserved in Trinity College, Dublin.”*

I proceed to set before the reader a translation of the principal of the canons to which I have alluded. They are taken from Villanueva’s edition of the “*Opuscula S. Patricii*,” Dublin, 1835, p. 171. How these canons

* See Mr. Hardiman’s *Introduction to the Statute of Kilkenny*, published by the Irish Archaeological Society.

could have escaped the notice of Dr. Lanigan, it is hard to say.

Canon 1. Some authors say that the tithes of cattle are only to be offered once, and that for this reason it will be holy of holies, *i. e.* there is no obligation for offering the tithe of them again. But others, with sound trustworthiness, affirm that we should give tithes to the Lord every year, both of things with and things without life, forasmuch as we have His gifts every year.

Canon 2. Also, with respect to all things (save the fruits of the earth) of which a tenth is once offered to the Lord, as it is said, whatever is consecrated once to the Lord shall be holy of holies to the Lord, they say, that a tenth of them need not again be presented, as the Doctor Colummanus taught. But of the fruits of the earth in each year a tithe ought to be offered, because they are produced every year.

Canon 3. Also, tithes are not only paid in things with life, but also those without life. So also first-fruits, *i. e.* the first-fruit of every thing, and the animal which is born first in the year: which are alike (that is, fall under the same rule) as being *the first increase*; but the *first born* are only of animals, not alone of men, but of all animals which it was lawful to sacrifice.

Canon 4. Also, tithes in cattle; first increase in fruits. First increase is whatever is born of cattle before others are born in the same year. It is to be known how much is the weight of the first-fruits—*i. e.* the *gomor*, as others, *i. e.* 9 loaves or 12 loaves. Then the shew-bread (*panes propositionis*) a matter of 9 loaves or 12 loaves. But of vegetables as much as the hand can grasp. These things should be paid in the beginning of the summer, and used to be offered once a year to the

priests at Jerusalem. But in the new [Testament] let every one offer in the monastery to which he is monk. And besides, charity abounds with the same; and the first-born are offered in males, never in females. (The great obscurity of this canon is an internal evidence of its antiquity.)

Canon 5. Also, as others (say), if any one's substance be less than a *decimum*, let him not pay tithes.

Canon 6. Also, as others, how ought any one to offer tithes to the Lord? If he should have only one heifer or cow, let him divide the price of the heifer by ten, and let him give the tenth part to the Lord, so also in other things.

The *decimum* mentioned in canon 5 was probably some standard by which certain tithes were measured or valued. Whoever had less than a *decimum* was not bound to pay at all. But according to canon 6 a single cow was in value more than a *decimum*, and therefore its owner was bound to pay tithe.

There is in the *Leabhar Breac*, fol. 6, a curious passage prescribing the manner of taking the tithes of cattle. It is as follows:—"Thus are tithes taken: viz., every animal that a person possesses is to be driven out through a gap, and every tenth animal of them is to be taken for God; except oxen alone, for all legitimate tithes are taken from the fruits of *their* labour."

In Jocelyn's Life of St. Patrick (cap. 174), we are told that all the Irish having submitted themselves to that saint, he proceeded to tithe the whole island, with its inhabitants of both sexes, and "commanded every tenth head, as well in men as in cattle, to be set apart for the Lord's portion. Then making all the men monks, the women nuns, he builded numerous monasteries, and

assigned for their support the tenth part of the lands and the cattle." The exaggeration of this story is manifest; but yet those best acquainted with Irish history would not, I think, reject it altogether.

But again, tithes are mentioned by Gillebert of Limerick in his tract *De Statu Ecclesiæ*, where he has these words: "*Parochiam appello populum, primitias, oblationes et decimas persolventem.*" And Dr. Lanigan himself acknowledges (vol. iv. p. 284) that tithes were perhaps paid in some places through the exertions of this same Gillebert, and of St. Malachy.

There is an interesting article embracing this subject in the *Dublin Review* (March 1844). The writer is of opinion, that although St. Patrick "may have recommended the voluntary payment of tithes," yet "the discipline of a tithing system" was not enforced "by civil and ecclesiastical laws" in Ireland before the English invasion, and then only within "the pale." Yet if the authority of the canons I have quoted be admitted, this opinion is untenable; for in that case it plainly follows from those canons:—1. That it was considered a religious duty in the ancient Irish Church to pay tithes; 2. That "the discipline of a tithing system" (somewhat minute, too, by the way) was regulated by "the ecclesiastical laws;" and 3. That tithes were *paid* by the ancient Irish Christians. For it will scarcely be said, either that the Church in those times made laws which it did not carry into force, or that, in the best days of the Irish Church, its members resisted its just authority.

The writer of the article alluded to adduces in support of his views some Irish canons which relate, indeed, not to tithes, but to oblations, almsgivings, and

other eleemosynary deeds. It is to be regretted that he did not see the acts of the "Synodus Sapientiae," published in the "Opuscula S. Patricii."

No. VII.

The following is the enactment referred to, p. 165: In the parliament held at Dublin A.D. 1475, 15, 16 Edw. IV. was passed the following Act:—60. Likewise at the prayer of Richard, abbot of the house of St. Thomas the Martyr, near Dublin, and James Aylmer: Whereas John Walter, parson of Mullahudart, hath given and granted to the said abbot and James, all manner of tithes and alterages belonging to the said parsonage, by his deed, bearing date the first day of November, in the thirteenth year of our Sovereign Lord that now is, to have and to hold to the said abbot and James for a term of twenty years then next ensuing, in perfect confidence that the said abbot and James should give yearly to one James Maddock six marks, until the said James should be promoted to a competent benefice, who is at Oxford studying at the University, and by the grace of God purposes to be a Doctor of Divinity; whereupon, the premises considered, forasmuch as there are but few in this land who are able to teach or preach the word of God, it is ordained, granted, and adjudged, by authority of the said parliament, that the said James Maddock shall have the said six marks yearly, of the said tithes and alterages, until he be promoted to a competent benefice, and that the incumbent for the time being shall have the residue of the said

tithes and alterages, any resignation or change of the said parson notwithstanding."¹

No. VIII.

I subjoin here a list of some of the principal synods held, of old, in the Irish Church. It is not as complete as I could wish; there were, no doubt, many convened, in the sixth and seventh centuries especially, of which no account has been preserved to us. In the succeeding centuries the Danish wars would seem to have interrupted the synodical assemblies of the Church.

	ANNO
1. Synod of St. Patrick, held about the year .	450
2. Another synod of St. Patrick (year uncertain). At these councils most of the canons noticed in Chap. III. pp. 19, 20, were enacted.	
3. A synod called “Synodus Sapientiæ” (year uncertain). The canons relating to tithes were passed in this synod.	
4. A synod called “Synodus Ibernensis” (held probably about the same time as the former).	
5. Synod of Cashel or Neagh Fennin .	484
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¹ See Hardiman's Statute of Kilkenny, notes, p. 129.

have been annexed to the see of Ferns. The synod was attended by the bishops, clergy, king, and people of the province. (See Lanigan, vol. ii. p. 338.)

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11. Synod of Usneach, held about the year	1111
It is uncertain whether this synod be not the same as the former. (See Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 37.)	
12. Synod of Rath-Breasail	1118
Regulated the dioceses of Ireland.	
13. Synod of Cashel	1134
14. Synod of Menedach O'Dubhthaich, archbishop of Armagh	1143
15. Synod of Holm-Patrick	1145
Agreed to solicit palls from Rome.	
16. Synod of Kells	1152
The palls were distributed at this synod by the Cardinal Paparo.	
17. Synod of Mellifont	1157
Assembled to consecrate the church of the monastery of Mellifont.	
18. Synod of Brigh-Thaig	1158
Gelasius, archbishop of Armagh, presided at this synod, which ordained that <i>Derry</i> should become an episcopal see (Vid. Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 309.)	
19. Synod of Roscommon	1158
A council of the province of Connaught. Its decrees do not appear to be extant. (See Ware and Harris, bishops at Armagh, p. 59.)	

20. Synod of Clane	1162
Enacted that none should be admitted to teach theology who had not first studied at the school of Armagh.	
21. Synod of Athboy	1167
This assembly was convened by Roderic O'Conor, king of Ireland, and was attended by several of the native bishops and princes. It passed many enactments re- lative to the political state of the country, and to ec- clesiastical discipline. (Colgan, Tr. Th. p. 310.)	
22. Synod of Armagh	1170
It was here decreed that all the English slaves in Ireland should be set at liberty.	
23. Synod of Cashel	1172
Convened by King Henry II. (See Chap. XII.)	
24. Synod of Tuam	1172
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25. Synod of Waterford	1175
At this assembly the bulls of Adrian and Alexander were first promulgated.	
26. Synod of Dublin	1177
Convened by Cardinal Vivian, who set forth in it Henry's right to the sovereignty of Ireland by virtue of the Pope's authority, and inculcated the necessity of obedience to him under pain of excommunication. (Lanigan, vol. iv. p. 233.)	
27. Synod of Dublin	1183
Held under John Cumin. (See Chap. XIV.)	
28. Synod of Dublin	1192
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Held by Henry de Loundres, the archbishop, "wherein he established many things profitable for the state of the Irish Church."	
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33. Synod of Dublin (year uncertain).		
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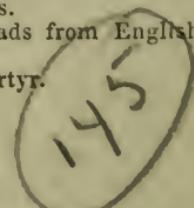
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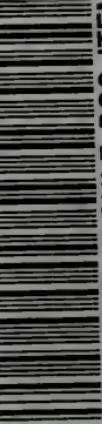




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